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MARY SEAHAM.

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VOL. I.

MARY SEAHAM.

A NOVEL.

BY MRS. GREY,

AUTHOR OF "THE GAMBLER'S WIFE,"

&c. &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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MARY SEAHAM.

CHAPTER I.

She left her home with a bounding heart,
For the world was all before her ;
And felt it scarce a pain to part,
Such sun-bright beams came o'er her.

A. A. WATTS.

THE wedding feast was cleared away, the guests had departed, and the last joy peal with its varied chimes, and crashing cannons from the old church tower was sounding musically through the mountain valley.

Over the whole aspect of Glan Pennant was spread that air of almost desolation, ever, more

or less, succeeding an event such as had, this day, been celebrated there.

The very servants, to whose festive entertainment the evening had been appropriated, whether able to carry out to the required extent the kind intentions of their employers, or reduced by the fatigue and excitement of the day to the condition of that establishment, Dickens has so ably and ludicrously described, at all events suffered not their notes of mirth to escape the precincts of their apartments. All was hushed as the sleeping beauty's palace in the superior portion of the mansion; and if not quite deserted, to one entering the house at the moment of this opening chapter, it might almost have seemed that the same spell had been cast over its inmates.

Another moment, however, and there could have been distinguished the quick opening and shutting of an upper chamber door, and soon down the staircase, a young lady, divested of all bridal costume, in every day

walking attire, might be seen to glide, and passing along the oaken passage to the door of the library, enter that apartment. A profound stillness reigned therein, though the room was not devoid of living occupants.

An old gentleman had quietly yielded himself to the indulgence of an evening nap in a maroon-coloured leather chair; whilst on an opposite sofa an elderly lady had, it seemed, been overtaken by the same necessity, whilst to the murmur of the summer breeze she contemplated the satisfactory completion of the day's great event, over the large piece of worsted work, in which, as it now lay idly at her feet, a little terrier dog had made its nest.

Mary Seaham looked upon this scene and smiled to herself. Her quiet entrance had not disturbed the sleepers. It amused her perhaps for a moment to witness a placid forgetfulness, affording so strong a contrast

to the eager bustle which had but so lately subsided.

But her smile, not exactly sorrowful, was gentle and subdued, harmonising entirely with the spirit of her movements, as well as with the whole character of the scene in which she seemed to play so solitary a part.

The smile, however, was soon chased by a slight sigh, and softly calling the little dog, who roused and shook itself at her summons, springing with alacrity to obey her call, she passed through the open window, and with a semblance of relief proceeded across the lawn, her spirit appearing to revive with every elastic step she took, beneath the influence of the fresh and open air.

* * * *

The clock struck eight as she passed from the grounds, and skirting the village

made her way through a romantic dell, where a rapid stream issued from a thick wood, turning the rustic mill situated at its base.

Slowly she ascended a precipitous hill leading to a heath-clad common. Although she had avoided the actual village, where rude attempts at wedding decorations would have greeted her on every side, and her appearance have attracted more notice than would have been agreeable to her feelings just then, she did not escape, during her route, some stray encounters ; and many a curtsy, smile, and kindly word, were bestowed upon her, by the good, simple-hearted people she met. Whilst none the less did she prize this greeting, because with the congratulatory expression of their countenances, something of pitying condolence might be visible.

The poor and humble however devoid they may be of sentiment, have often readier sympathy for the natural feeling of humanity, than we are apt to give them credit, and they could

compassionate the poor young lady who had acted bridesmaid to a last unmarried sister—seen that sister carried far from home—and she left behind all alone with the old people.

Perhaps their compassion might extend almost further than the real state of the case required.

It is very sad indeed to be left behind under similar circumstances. The void, the blank, at first experienced, is perhaps one of the most painful of all mental affections that can be sustained. But I think there is something almost more melancholy, in what is sooner or later sure to follow, in more or less degree according to the tone of men's minds or the circumstances of their position—namely, when the aching void begins imperceptibly to assuage, the blank to fill up, and we cease to miss, or with difficulty realize the consciousness of our bereavement; when the strong realities and intimate associations of years seem, as by one magic touch, obliterated, and we would fain

recall even the haunting shadows of the past,
to assure us that such things have been.

“ We cannot paint to memory’s eye
The scene, the glance we dearest love,
Unchanged themselves, in us they die,
Or faint and false their shadows prove.”

But Mary Seaham was not to be subjected to any of the latter contingencies. She, also was to depart on the morrow from the home of many years, and it is to contemplate scenes which for a long time she may not look upon again, that we find her hastening.

* * * *

The history of Mary Seaham’s present position was this : She was an orphan, and till the return of a brother from the colonies, where he had gone to examine into the state of some very important family property ; she was thrown, (particularly since the event celebrated that morning) to a certain extent, alone upon the world. Even had she desired to linger in

her deserted home, the privilege was denied her. Circumstances rendering it expedient that Glan Pennant should continue to be let until the final settlement of her brother's affairs, and the Great uncle and aunt who had hitherto rented the place from their nephew, and at the same time filled the office of affectionate guardians to their unmarried nieces, now in their old age, becoming desirous of being established more among their kindred and acquaintances, than in this beautiful but distant, and out of the way country.

They were shortly to leave Wales and settle in London, with an only daughter, who had lost her husband, and lately returned from India, with her children.

The offer had been kindly made to Mary, to make her home with these relations under this new arrangement; but being a stranger to her Indian cousins, together with other motives for its rejection, she declined the proffer, at least for the present, and preferred

accepting an invitation to spend the rest of the summer with another cousin and his wife in ——shire, although these relations, except from early associations, which drew her towards them with interest and affection, might be said to be almost equally unknown to her ; thus her future prospects, were but of a very dim and uncertain nature.

But Mary Seaham did not take this much to heart. She was not of an age or character, nor did she possess experience sufficient, to feel any great weight of depression on this score.

The melancholy she now felt was rather of the soft, tender nature from which, like the early blossom beneath the influence of the mild spring air, her soul seemed struggling forth with hope and longing towards the uncertain future.

Although now one and twenty, her life had been, in its outward course, so calm and circumscribed, within the current of home interests, and domestic affections ; so gently and gradually had the home circle broken up

around her, link by link falling away, till she scarcely felt the influence of the change, that it was with confiding pleasure rather than any anxious care, or restless misgiving, she contemplated an entrance upon a changed sphere of action, never doubting but that she should find love and affection, such as she had ever been accustomed to receive, in all those professing friends who now came forward with proffered assistance in her time of need.

“In every heart a home, in every home a heaven.”

In the warm-hearted cousin she remembered of old, one in whom she might repose trust and confidence, as in a brother, and in his beautiful and engaging wife the truth and sympathy of a sister.

Seated, therefore, upon the heathy common, there was more of pleasant dreaminess than of regretful sadness influencing her spirit, as her eyes wandered over the prospect spread before her with the attention of one, who would fain

engrave each familiar feature on her memory, and bear away therein, a true and vivid picture of their beauties.

The pretty valley we have described lay immediately at her feet, with the woods beyond, amongst which proudly rose the mansion of Plas Glyn, of which her sister, by her marriage that morning with Sir Hugh Morgan, had become the youthful mistress; and a faint peculiar smile played on Mary's countenance as she sat there in her solitary freedom, and dwelt for a moment on this feature of the landscape.

But it had passed away, when her glance turned towards the spot where stood her own more modest, but still fairer home, Glan Pennant—then upwards, where the mountain ridges towering one above the other, were now irradiated by one of those sunsets of rare magnificence, which nature seemed to have called forth on this occasion, as a farewell token of affection to her meek and loving votary.

CHAPTER II.

Once, and once only, let me speak
Of all that I have felt for years ;
You read it not upon my cheek,
You dreamed not of it in my tears.

L. E. L.

WHILST thus absorbed, a step whose sound the soft carpetting on which it trod had not permitted her to hear, approached near to where Mary Seaham sat, and a voice broke upon her reverie.

She started a little, but perceiving who was the intruder, with a smile and only a slightly heightened colour, she arose and frankly ex-

tended her hand with the gentle exclamation :
“ Mr. Temple !”

The person thus addressed was a man in the full vigour of his days ; of tall commanding figure, whose pale and noble countenance seemed to wear less marks of worldly care than of high and chastened thought.

His temples were already partly bare, but the rest of his thick dark curly hair bespoke the strength of manhood, and his eye, full and eloquent, beamed with a spirit and enthusiasm which might have become a martyr. The black dress he wore, seemed to denote his clerical profession.

“ I shall not apologize so much as I should otherwise have done, for thus abruptly disturbing you Miss Seaham ;” were the words of his rich full-toned voice, “ concluding as I do, that this evening, your meditations must naturally be of somewhat melancholy a nature.”

“ About an hour ago you would have been

but too right in your conclusion, Mr. Temple ;” responded the young lady. “The bustle of the day over, the dreary feeling of being ‘the last left,’ was stealing over me to a most insupportable degree, but since I quitted the deserted house, the influence of this lovely evening has worked most effectually on my feelings. In the open air I think this is generally the case,” she added. “However, the sense of isolation and separation, may oppress one in the confinement of the house. Here, one can feel at least that the same blue sky,” and Miss Seaham as she spoke lifted up her clear serene eyes to the heaven above, “over-canopies us all. I have,” she continued with simple feeling, and a slight suffusion of the eye-lid: “great need for my comfort, to realise that perhaps rather vague idea, for we shall be now indeed a most scattered family. Arthur in America, Jane and Selina in India, Alice in Scotland and Aggy so soon to be in Italy.”

She paused, her voice slightly faltering, as

if the idea of this domestic dispersion, when thus recorded in words, had brought the truth before her with too much painful reality.

“And you, Miss Seaham,” interrogated Mr. Temple, a slight tremor also perceptible in his deep clear voice, and which a kind and friendly sympathy in the young lady’s sadness might naturally have occasioned, “do you really desert Glan Pennant so very soon?”

“Yes, Mr. Temple, and had I not relied upon your promise of calling this evening, I should have sent to let you know. I could not have gone without seeing you again. I leave Glan Pennant to-morrow morning. I travel part of the way with the Merediths, and some change in their arrangements make this necessary. I own that it is a relief that I am not to linger any longer here, though this speedy departure has come upon me rather suddenly.”

She looked up, as her companion did not immediately reply to this intelligence, and then he inquired seriously if she still kept to her

resolution of visiting her relations in ——shire. She answered in the affirmative.

“It is a long time since your cousin, Mr. de Burgh, and I have met,” he, after some little cautious consideration, remarked. “We were schoolfellows and college friends. Our lives have taken a different turn since then, and I suppose our tastes and manners of life likewise. At least I understand”—slightly hesitating—“that he has married a gay wife, and, with his large fortune, I suppose, acts up to his circumstances and position; but in days of old, I remember Louis de Burgh to have been a man of quieter tastes and habits than his friend Edward Temple.”

“I have seen nothing of my cousin since his marriage, nor of his wife either. But their letters are the kindest and most affectionate, as you may suppose,” she added, “by my having accepted their invitation to pay them so long a visit.”

“Ah, I once knew a great deal of some

members of her family," Mr. Temple continued, speaking, not so much in the way of common conversation, than as if moved by some under current of deep and serious interest. "And you think," he added, "that you shall find your cousin's house agreeable?"

There was something dubious in his tone of voice, as he uttered that last enquiry, and Miss Seaham smiled.

"You think perhaps I shall find it too gay to suit my quiet fancy," she said, again raising her eyes to her companion's face.

He looked down upon her, and after a short pause answered with simple earnestness.

"I only think that we shall miss you sadly here."

Miss Seaham shook her head.

"I fear not, Mr. Temple," she said ingenuously; "not half so much, at least, as Selina and Aggy must be missed. I am ashamed of myself, when I think how little I have done, during the last five or six years, in comparison

with my more active sisters—how I have selfishly dreamt away my time, whilst they—and Aggy, my younger sister too—have been continually going about doing good. Truly like Wordsworth's old Mathew, I have been, I am afraid,

“‘ An idler in the land,
Contented if I might enjoy what others understand.’

No, Mr. Temple, I fear you must have found me a very incompetent disciple, and only flatter me when you talk of missing my services.”

Mr. Temple smiled.

“I did not indeed speak professionally when I talked of missing you,” he rejoined in a low, earnest tone, “though I by no means subscribe to your self-accusations, on the score of uselessness ; besides, there are such things as moral influences,” he added more seriously, with no assumption of superiority, but almost reverence in his tone and manner, “and in such, I am sure, as more than one can testify, you have not been found wanting, whilst at

the same time remember, *Mary* more than Martha found acceptance in the eyes of Him they equally desired to serve."

"Alas! alas! Mr. Temple, if you do not flatter, you make me deeply ashamed, and I fear for the first time," she added with a degree of playful reproach, "I must set you down as an unfaithful pastor—speaking false-praise, when you should be sending me away with serious exhortation and advice as to my future course of life." The colour mounted in sudden force to Mr. Temple's brow.

"Then God forgive me my unfaithfulness if so it be!" he murmured with strong emotion, "for I do indeed confess, that never did I feel less competent to act the part of Mentor, than I do now, standing before you this evening, only trembling to be awakened from a dream I fear as futile—though not less sweet—as any day-dream which may have coloured the pure light of your existence, Miss Seaham."

She looked up. Startled by the thrilling

earnestness of the speaker's voice, and still more struck by the expression of the countenance bent down upon her, Mary Seaham withdrew her gaze in some confusion the crimson blood suffusing her temples, and with averted countenance, she said, with some hurried embarrassment, whilst striving to recover from the sort of alarm her feelings had undergone, yet scarcely conscious of what she uttered.

"I am not sorry then to find that *you* also can indulge in the weakness of a day-dream!"

But the awkward pause then followed—for Mr. Temple was silent after she made this remark and beginning to fear lest she might have offended him by its apparent lightness, she turned a timid glance towards her companion.

He was stooping down caressing the little dog by her side, not looking offended, but grave and abstracted.

She was reassured, and regarding him as thus he continued, seemingly absorbed in his own

particular thoughts—his fine, strikingly handsome and intellectual countenance on which seemed to have been originally impressed the stamp of talent of a higher order, and fitted for a wider field of action than the little theatre in which they at present found employment—the feelings to which this observation gave rise, moved her to express herself in accents not devoid of gentle, admiring interest, when she said :

“ Mr. Temple, do not think me impertinent, but I sometimes wonder that you should linger so long in this remote, retired spot, where all the good that it is in your power to effect is necessarily of so limited and contracted a nature. Indeed,” with a blush and a smile at her own temerity, “ I shall feel almost a melancholy regret in thinking of you, when I am away, hiding your talents, wasting your powers amongst the mountain heather, or on the humble inhabitants of this obscure, though lovely valley.”

“ ‘What dost thou here, frail wanderer from thy task ?

Why hast thou left those few sheep in the wild ?’ ”

quoted Mr. Temple, a look of pleasure nevertheless lighting up the face which he again raised towards her.

“ But a self-imposed task may not yours at present be ? ” persisted Miss Seaham.

He shook his head, but with the same smile continued :

“ I never thought to have found *you* my tempter ; but now tell me, whither would you direct me ? ”

“ *I* direct you ! oh, Mr. Temple, you speak ironically ; but surely, there must be ways and means, by which one like you, may more effectually use your powers to the glory of God and the good of mankind, than by remaining in this secluded place, amongst people, who for the most part, do not even comprehend your language. If I understood aright, you only retired for a time, when some sorrow or trouble came upon you. I am very bold,

to-night;" breaking off in some confusion, for she perceived a deep palor overspread his countenance, "but, I hope, now that there is such an excellent man as Mr. Lloyd to fulfil your voluntary duties, amongst the poor people of this dear place, you will not doom yourself longer to such—I could almost fancy it—ungenial retirement."

"Where should I go?" he sadly said, but with an earnestness which again surprised and startled Mary, whilst he fixed his eyes on her face as if on her answer his future course depended.

"Where?" she repeated with embarrassment, "you ask *me*, who know so little of the world, *you* who know so much?"

"I do indeed," he replied, with something of bitterness in his tone, "and my experience, my dear Miss Seaham, has not made that text to me so difficult of fulfilment which says, 'Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.' But you will think that I speak

to-night more like a disappointed melancholy misanthrope than a minister of that Word, which breathes forth the spirit of peace and goodwill towards men; nor will you think it kind that I thus unfavourably impress you concerning this world, with which, it may be said, you, almost for the first time, are about to make acquaintance."

"I, Mr. Temple? oh no, indeed. I look upon myself as far too insignificant a being, one destined to play far too insignificant a part on that great stage to fear much its enmity."

"Or its friendship?" Mr. Temple responded interrogatively; "for we must remember, 'that the *friendship* of the world is enmity with God!'"

He spoke these words with a certain sad solemnity.

Miss Seaham listened to the exhortation in meek, submissive silence, though to look upon her calm, sweet, holy countenance one might

have thought the sin of worldliness could scarcely cleave to the soul which seemed reflected thereupon.

A silence again succeeded, broken by Mr. Temple.

"Miss Seaham, do you think you shall find the life in this same great world, so suited to your tastes as that which has glided by so peacefully in this quiet sphere of action?"

"Perhaps not," she answered; but with frank simplicity quickly added, "yet I cannot but fancy I might enjoy this all the more if I were permitted to return from having been parted from my old pursuits for a little time—from having seen more, and entered upon a more varied scene of existence."

"This is but a natural fancy," Mr. Temple resumed, "but the trial is a dangerous one. Of thousands who so return, like soldiers from the battle field, to their peaceful homes, there are few, I fear, who come not back to find their former existence of innocent enjoyment

blighted by the wounds and bruises wherewith their hearts and spirits have been inflicted during that sorrowful campaign. They return—may be to live resigned, but seldom happy—happy at least with that same peaceful joy which was before their portion, they come either thus to pass their days or—die.”

Mr. Temple paused for a moment, evidently to command the agitation of his voice; he then resumed:

“And, alas! Miss Seaham, it is not always the least proud and un conspicuous objects of assault who are thus brought low—made the mark of this same, blasting world. Not the eagle only, but the dove, is pierced and wounded by the archer. No, the purest and holiest must, more or less, sooner or later, if not amalgamated in its sin, at least be stricken by its sorrow and its evil—I should rather say its evil men ‘the men of this world.’ Oh, Miss Seaham, beware of such men.”

He spoke again with an earnestness so

bordering on enthusiastic excitement that Miss Seaham, though almost inclined to treat with playful lightness a warning which might have seemed to exceed the occasion, or her case, suddenly felt the words thrill through her heart with that peculiar feeling, which the superstitious, or sometimes even those who deride such significance, are apt to interpret as a *presentiment*. An involuntary shudder ran through her frame, and "the evening fair as ever," began to her altered sensation to turn chill and dusk.

"You forget," she murmured, in faltering, almost reproachful accents, "you forget, Mr. Temple, while you thus, in kindness I am sure, diminish any attractive idea I may have formed of society, for it is, I conclude, the society of the world, not anything appertaining to the good and beautiful world itself, which can prove so hurtful and invidious, you forget that I do not voluntarily seek its dangers, or rush upon its temptations, but that I am in a

manner thrown upon its mercy. It is not permitted me to stay here. My sister in Scotland would gladly receive me, but she is not entirely mistress of her own actions, and her large family would make such an addition inconvenient. Is it not then natural that thus situated I should, until the return of my brother, accept the pressing invitations of such kindly disposed relations as my cousin and his wife, though their position and circumstances may involve me in a wider and perhaps gayer circle of acquaintance than that into which I have hitherto been thrown.

She spoke in a half pleading tone, and with almost tearful eyes, for the urgent manner in which the subject under discussion had been pressed upon her consideration, began gradually to work upon her mind in the manner we have described.

Mr. Temple listened with eager attention to her words, bending down his head as if to prevent his losing one syllable of their sig-

nificance, and then when she ceased to speak, his countenance brightened hopefully.

“ But were your circumstances—your position the only motive which compelled you to such a resource?” he earnestly rejoined, “ and if a hand were stretched forth would you repulse it—a hand which would fain withhold one too pure and good for a soil uncongenial to qualities of that nature, to all that is pure, lovely and of good report. Oh, Miss Seaham, would you, will you reject it when it is extended, and with it a heart trembling for the answer which is to proceed from your lips. Yes!” he hurried on as if with the nervous desire to postpone what he so eagerly awaited; “ this is as you say, a world most good and beautiful. The glories of the Great Jehovah still gild this ruined earth. Yes, beautiful it is—beyond even what this fair country, wild and lovely of its kind, as it may be, can convey an idea to those whose experience extends no farther. Yes, it is most right and natural that you, with a mind above

the common range, should thirst for such enjoyment; and oh! what happiness—what privilege to be the means of ministering to the desire—to be your guide—your guardian dear Miss Seaham, to regions whose charms even your refined imaginative mind is scarce able to conceive. But what do I say? My fears were indeed too well grounded, my dream dissolves apace, if I read aright the expression of that calm astonished countenance!”

CHAPTER III.

And so, beloved one—life's all—farewell !
Still by my hearth thy gentle shade shall dwell,
Still shall my soul, where night the dreariest seem,
Fly back to thee, O soft—O vanish'd dream !

THE NEW TIMON.

WHAT indeed had Mary heard—what did she understand ?

Mr. Temple the great, the excellent—he who for the many years he had made that retired neighbourhood his abode, had shone with such bright and exalted lustre among his little circle of acquaintances, inspiring in the minds of all, especially of those best able to appreciate his superiority, the family of Glan

Pennant—admiring regard almost approaching to veneration, who to their eyes appeared more to approach in character as far as mortal may without impiety be said to approach, to that Great Being—Him who made himself of no reputation, stooped from his high estate — humbled himself for the sake of the poor and ignorant of mankind—was it he who thus addressed her?

From what could be gleaned gradually from his discourse, by those with whom he became most intimately associated, a man of high family and connections, he had come unknown and lonely, like one dropped suddenly from some higher sphere, divested of all proud pretensions, to act as a voluntary and unostentatious minister to the wants and necessities both temporal and spiritual of the poor and needy, whilst at the same time affecting no misanthropic and reclusive habits, though a certain impenetrable mystery ever hung over his former history, he did not shrink from

mixing in social intercourse with the very few families of which the retired neighbourhood could boast, and more particularly with the inmates of Glan Pennant; becoming a zealous assistant in all the charitable pursuits and interests in which the young sisters of the house had engaged with such active and untiring interest, as long as they remain unmarried.

Mary Seaham, perhaps, had been the one whose character and pursuits had thrown her less than any of the family in the way of similar association, and therefore might have been the least prepared to find she had made so strong an impression on Mr. Temple's feelings, as his present discourse discovered her to have done. But it was not so much surprise, nor on the other hand, was it so much an overwhelming sense of the honour done her by such distinction, as a feeling almost approaching to self-disgust—shame; which for some moments kept her silently rooted to

the spot with that expression of countenance, her trembling lover had interpreted as cold astonishment, excited by his proposal.

Ashamed and sorrowful she felt, as one might be to whom some guardian angel—some higher spirit from another sphere—had stooped to offer himself as guide and guardian through this earthly pilgrimage, and she the favoured mortal had turned away, despising the blessed boon thus proffered, saying :

“ I will go forth and try whether I cannot walk amidst the dangerous paths alone, or find at least some other Lord to have dominion over me.”

Or, as the self convicted Israelite, who seeing the heavenly manna scattered round his path, felt his heart still turn away, after the flesh pots of Egypt.

This we mean to say was the light in which Mary was inclined to view her feelings on this occasion. No one else, perhaps, would have judged them so harshly, seeing in the first

place, that the very exalted superiority which in her own eyes made her heart's rejection of Mr. Temple's suit, a reflection on her taste and feelings, would in the opinion of others have rendered it but the more excusable ; whilst in the estimation of those possessed of less pure and simple enthusiasm than the lady of his love, the possibility of such high strained excellence existing in the life and character of a man of mortal mould, might have been strongly doubted.

But as it was, Mary Seaham now with down-cast eyes and faltering tongue, gave answer when to answer she was able, in such sort as might have suited more an ashamed and humble penitent, confessing to a superior being a sin or an infirmity, than a woman free to choose or to reject, yielding her gentle death blow to a trembling lover's hopes.

“ Mr. Temple, how humbling to my feelings is the opinion you must have so flatteringly formed of me, ere you could have addressed me

thus ; an opinion, alas ! how little accordant with reality. I fear, if you read my mind, my character aright, you would start aside at the unexpected fact of discovering worldly tastes and feelings, lying hidden there, dormant only, perhaps, from want of time and opportunity for bringing them forth. What, for instance, would you say, were I to acknowledge that it is not so much the world—in the sense you have described it, with which I am desirous of becoming acquainted, as that very world which you, in your well grounded experience, so much condemn. I mean,” she added the colour tinging her cheek, “I mean its society.”

“Society !” Mr. Temple repeated, looking down upon her with a sad, but mild and tender expression ; “alas ! can it indeed be so ? your pure hopes and aspirations, do they really tend in that direction ?”

“I had always fancied,” she pursued apologetically, “that much of good and beautiful—much worthy of interest and admiration, might be met

with in that last great work of the Almighty ; and I may be said to have comparatively seen as little of that branch of the creation in its varied characters as of any other," she added with a smile.

" And you go forth," he responded, in the same tone and manner as before, "with your unsophisticated imaginings—your poetic fancy—prepared to find this so called society peopled with the beings you have pictured in your dreams?"

" No, no ! not quite that," she rejoined with returning animation ; " but, Mr. Temple, do you really consider the whole circle of society individually as well as collectively, in so dark a light ? Are there no flowers amongst the thorns—no wheat among the tares ?"

" Yes truly," he responded with a still more sorrowful and earnest interest, as he marked the glowing cheek and unwonted excitement of the loved enquirer ; " but the tares unhappily in that cursed ground—cursed for man's guilty sake !—too much preponderate, and those spring-

ing up, choke the wheat till even *they* become unfruitful. But, oh, Miss Seaham ! am I answered now ? The words, the acknowledgement you have just made are they the vehicles you have chosen, by which to convey your final rejection of that which I have dared to proffer, for if not, here is a hand and heart as ready and willing—if possible ten times more eager—to be allowed to guide and guard you through those dangerous paths you desire to tread. Think not that I will shrink from turning back even to that world I have so condemned ; if it be to walk by your side—to protect—to guide—to guard you there. Yes,” he murmured to himself, whilst some strong emotion evidently struggled for mastery, as the idea suggested itself to his imagination, and again his cheek became deadly pale. “For her sweet sake—with such an angel by my side—what could I not brave, what could I not encounter ? Even thou, mine enemy ! thou and thine insidious unnatural machinations !”

Then recollecting himself, Mr. Temple turned in some alarm, lest his half muttered soliloquy might have created unpleasant surprise in the mind of her he was so anxious to propitiate. But his fear was groundless. Mary Seaham, too much engrossed by the more apparent subject of his discourse, so completely absorbing her attention, heeded not the mysterious tendency of these latter words, and when recollecting himself, he again paused in breathless enquiry; she could only shake her head, and with averted face and downcast eyes, sorrowfully confess her unworthiness, and her rejection of such distinguished favour as had been shown her by his offer. Then in other words more clear and explicit, she faltered forth sentences which tended slowly and sadly to convey with certainty to Mr. Temple's mind—and what to him were the others feelings, bowing down the young girl's heart before him as before a superior being—that the one feeling he required was wanting there—the love which alone could

crown his hopes—induce her to become his wife. A dreary pause ensued. It might have seemed that even nature sympathized in the disappointment of one human heart, so hushed and still was all around.

The silence was broken by Mr. Temple. His voice had recovered the wonted calm of its low, deep accents as thus he spoke :

“And in this world of imagination—this dream-land sphere which you own, alas ! to have been no coral strands or balmy groves of the natural world, but the glittering shores, the giddy mazes of society—there wherein you have long in fancy loved to wander, and now in the might of your innocence and purity of heart, so confidently and gladly haste to enter and prove their reality. Tell me, amongst all the features of your glowing picture, has your mind formed for itself hopes and aspirations, which have in any degree stood in the way of those which I had dared to entertain ? Have your dreams carried you thus far, or do you go into the world,

with—at least on this one point, your heart and feelings, I should rather say—your fancy, disengaged ?”

He did not speak as if in mockery and disdain to a weak and romantic girl, but with the serious delicate kindness of one whose very skill and knowledge in diving amongst the fantastic images of the human heart, is all the less moved to scorn or derision at the conception of its hidden enormities.

Mary Seaham started. The crimson blood suffused her pure pale cheek. She shrank from the enquiring scrutiny of that dark eye bent down upon her, as if she felt that it had power to draw forth into light and substance every indistinct shadow, each vague imagination which had ever floated across her mind, a power too, which it was not possible by commonplace subterfuge to evade. Something also in that dark eye strangely affected her at that moment ; the impression it produced, connecting itself in an indescribable manner, with the

very dream and fancy, Mr. Temple's searching words had stirred up within her conscience.

But the sense and spirit of her soul's pure innocence soon came to Mary Seaham's relief. She shook off the morbid consciousness, and with ingenuous courage, turning with bright open face to her inquirer, replied :

“That I have had many a foolish dream, Mr. Temple, connected with the world of my imagination, I will not attempt to deny, but to the dignity of hopes and aspirations, I assure you, they have never yet arrived—never attained to such weight and importance in my mind, as would lead me to the folly or madness of allowing them to interfere with the substantial good—the real blessing which have this evening been laid before my unworthy acceptance, and which—”

“Enough !” interrupted Mr. Temple, as if to save himself, and her, the pain of further explanation as to the motives which had forbidden the acceptance of those acknowledged blessings.

"Enough dear Miss Seaham. Dream on, and never may you wake from the pure and blameless dreams, which, whatever be their nature, can alone have taken rise in such a soul. Never may you awake from these to dark sorrowful reality. But should you so awake, and find those dreams dispersed, and Providence should again place us in each other's paths, remember. . . . But alas!" he broke off abruptly, "of what avail such imaginings? May God preserve you in this evil world! is all that remains for me to pray."

He wrung her hand in strong emotion, and when Mary Seaham raised her tearful eyes to thank him for his fervent vow, Mr. Temple had turned away, his tall form was already to be seen slowly disappearing across the darkening common—and this long and singular interview was at an end.

Mary in her turn hurried home, and all that had passed seemed to her recollection but as a bewildering dream, when she found herself once

more in the quiet library, officiating for the last time at the tea table, which with the hissing urn, she found standing ready awaiting her return.

CHAPTER IV.

They grew in beauty, side by side,
They filled one house with glee,
Their *homes* are severed far and wide,
By mount and stream and sea.

HERMANS.

Pure girl! thy tender presence
Has an unconscious ministry to me,
And near thee, in the night that shrouds me still,
My darkness is forgotten.

WILLIS.

THE good old couple, awakened from their refreshing slumber, had already sent a servant in search of their missing niece, wondering a little what could keep her out so late upon

this last night at Glan Pennant, after a day of such fatigue, and the eve of her long journey.

But Mary told them that she had been detained talking to Mr. Temple, whom she had met upon the hill, and they were glad that she had seen him, little devising all that parting interview had comprised, or they might not have been quite so well satisfied with the part their niece had taken therein. For it being their chief anxiety to see this last remaining niece well settled in life, now that the critical and uncertain circumstances of the family affairs rendered some secure provision so desirable, and their matter of fact perceptions leading them to regard Mr. Temple in the light of a very exemplary clergyman, of comfortable means—and judging from his gentlemanly carriage and superior conversation, more than from his own profession, or other guarantee—of good family and birth; they had often thought, and even ventured to express in

words to each other, what a good husband he would make for their quiet Mary, whose tastes and qualities—judging from the same simple-minded rule of observation, which never saw ought beyond the surface of appearance or boundary of circumstances—the good old couple interpreted, were exactly those befitting her for the vocation to be thereby entailed upon her, namely, that of clergyman's wife, an inference which we have seen from our heroine's own confessions that evening, to have been by no means correctly drawn.

Mary Seaham's four sisters had been severally disposed of in marriage, since by the death of their father, the charge of the orphan daughters had devolved upon them. The eldest in every way—as the eldest daughter of a family is often seen to do—most to the entire approval and satisfaction of her friends.

The superior advantages of a girl's intro-

duction into the world, under the care and superintendence of sensible and estimable parents, had distinguished her opening career above those of her other sisters, and she had been engaged before her father's death to Lord Everingham—whom she subsequently married—a nobleman of high worth and distinction, at this time holding a considerable post in India.

Alice, the second daughter, a few years after, became the wife of Mr. Gillespie, a Scotch lawyer, with whom she had become acquainted whilst visiting some friends in Scotland, and he being a widower, with children already provided for her care, to whose number she had duly added, her's had proved no sinecure undertaking. But laudably had she fulfilled the destiny appointed her, devoting herself in her still youthful years without a murmur or backward look of regret to the life of comparative drudgery which this choice of a husband had

entailed upon her—a course of life to which sneerers may be ready to apply the slighting axiom of Iago,

“To suckle fools and chronicle small beer;”

but which nevertheless, when thus accomplished, may be accounted one of the most honourable a woman can fulfil, the one perhaps best meriting that commendation which the faithful workers in this world's vineyard shall receive at the last day. “Well done, thou good and faithful servant,” &c., and though some might have fancied, at the time that Alice Seaham, with her refined tastes, and somewhat superior qualifications, was entering on a vocation she was ill fitted to sustain, either with pleasure or profit to herself or others, it surprised them to find how little these characteristics stood in the way of her usefulness, capability, or perfect contentment in the part she was called upon to act on this life's theatre—that part which devolves on the wife of a professional man, with an increasing

family, and limited income. How far more usefully and happily employed for herself and others were those refined tastes, and those superior qualifications, though thus adapted, like the beautiful plants and products of the foreign climes, to the common uses and necessities of mankind, than if suffered to expand and expend themselves upon the leafless desert, in selfish, listless, idle inefficiency, often preying morbidly on their own resources for lack of legitimate exercise or healthful outlet—those very tastes and qualifications, proving oftener a curse and a reproach, than a blessing and an ornament to their possessor. For woman's strength and honour lie in her heart, in her affections, in the duties which from them devolve; if she lean upon her own understanding, trusts to the resources of her mind, or intellect, she leans on a broken reed, she makes for herself broken cisterns which can hold no water.

* * * * *

Selina Seaham, the third daughter, and the beauty of the family, only one year before the marriage celebrated on the day in question, consulted the inclinations of her own heart, rather than the prudent wishes of her friends, and gave her hand to an officer, who had immediately after left England to join his regiment in India with his bride; and then the two younger sisters had remained together at Glan Pennant, without any seeming prospect of such speedy disseverment as had since occurred, till some months after, Sir Hugh Morgan, the great man of those parts, to the astonishment of all, proposed to the youngest Miss Seaham and was accepted; he being her senior by some five-and-twenty years. And though he had ever been on very intimate and friendly terms with the family, had not shown any tendency that way since the time, when, on the Seahams first coming to settle in the neighbourhood, after their father's death—Mr. Seaham having absented

himself from Glan Pennant for some years, for the education of his daughters—Sir Hugh Morgan made an offer of his hand to the eldest daughter, and finding himself at fault, she being engaged at the very time to Lord Everingham, oddly overlooked the precedence of the genius and the beauty amongst the sisters, and transferred his offer of a place in his hard-named pedigree to the startled Mary, then a girl of scarcely seventeen. But though a man of much honest worth, not to speak of the worldly recommendations of the match, the proposal produced no effect upon the mind of the unambitious maiden, but surprise and repugnance.

“And she refused him, though her aunt did say,

’Twas an advantage she had thrown away.

(He an advantage!) That she’d live to rue it.”

Whether or not, she had reason for repentance on this score, may cause, amongst those who follow her future history a difference of

opinion. But certain it is, that with not a pang of envious regret on her own account, had she seen her young and blooming sister, Agnes, give her hand that morning, five years after the event of her refusal to the same excellent man, the only disagreeable feeling the occasion excited in her mind being, the difficulty of reconciling herself to the idea, that her dear, pretty, young sister Aggy, should so cheerfully acquiesce in a fate which had once raised in her own mind such unqualified disinclination.

But then she was the only individual in the world, who did not think the fair bride the luckiest creature in the world, and the wisest.

“Who but a fool like me, they think, no doubt,” mused Mary Seaham, with a humble sigh, “would have rejected such an advantage as they seem to consider it. True, I was only seventeen at the time, but am I wiser at twenty-one? to-night’s experience has well shown forth.” And she remembered

a certain fable which had composed a portion of her childhood's lessons, 'The dog and the shadow,' and smiled in very scorn and derision at her own puerility.

But alas ! there are shadows which our wild and wilful imaginations have conjured up which, scorn and deride them as we may, are destined to cast a darkening influence on our future destinies.

" Our fatal shadows that walk by us still ;"

to become, in fact, a substance—a reality—from which we would often fain be able to awake and say : it was a dream.

" Grant us not the ill we ask—in very love refuse—
That which we know, our weakness would abuse."

But it is as well, perhaps, to retrograde, in order to relate the incident which some years ago had cast its beguiling shadows upon the pure stream of our heroine's young existence.

She was scarcely sixteen, when, under the *chaperonage* of her sister, Lady Everingham, then a bride, she had found herself at the summer fête, given by the father of her cousin, Mr. de Burgh's beautiful betrothed. Lady Everingham was taken ill soon after her arrival, and returned home with her husband, leaving her young sister under the nominal care of her cousin, Louis de Burgh, and his *fiancée* (the queen of that day's revels), who had, with the most eager kindness, taken upon themselves the charge, but as may be naturally supposed were but far too much better employed to carry out their good intentions, so that Mary, having for some little time kept near them, feeling very greatly *de trop*, being at length divided for an instant from their side, saw the lovers, when next in view, disappear together within the shade of a *bosquet*, and she left alone amidst these few strangers, and indifferent friends, who happened to be near the spot.

Her youth and timidity made this situation

of itself one of sufficient embarrassment to her feelings, there being none with whom she felt such a degree of intimacy or acquaintance as gave her courage to claim their protection or companionship, but when these even began to drop off by degrees from the parterre, wherein a portion of the company had assembled, and the last lady had eventually departed without her having the courage to follow in her train, poor Mary's distress was at its climax. Only a group, composed of several gentlemen, with not one of whom she was in any way acquainted, remained behind.

The solitary position in which she found herself, causing her to become a conspicuous object, the timid, though not awkward embarrassment of the young girl as she stood irresolute, whether to remain or to retire, attracted the attention of the party. They all looked at her, one or two exchanged smiles which poor Mary was very quick to interpret into those of amusement and derision; and

crimsoning to the temples, she was preparing to glide away in desperate search of her cousin, when out of that very group from whose fancied satire she was so anxious to escape, a gentleman stepped forward and politely addressed her.

He was afraid that she had lost her friends ; could he in any way assist her ? She thanked him, and hesitatingly murmured the names of her cousin and his bride elect. But this seemed sufficient explanation to the gentleman, with regard to the situation to which he found the young lady exposed. He smiled good-naturedly—feared she must not find fault with any deficiency in *their chaperonage* just now ; and begged her to accept his arm, and avail herself of his escort until she could be restored to the runaways. The speaker was young and handsome. Mary Seaham looked up gratefully into the dark eyes bent down so kindly upon her. The tone in which he mentioned her cousin seemed to denote that

an intimacy existed between them. But setting aside these considerations, there was no prudery in that young and innocent heart. She placed her arm within that of the stranger's with the *naïve* and simple confidence of a child, and suffered him to lead her away from the scene of her discomfiture.

Neither did he seem in any hurry to relieve himself of the charge he had undertaken, for though he met and spoke to many lady friends, to whose care he might, had he desired it, have committed Mary, he did not avail himself of the opportunity but still continued to conduct her here and there—finding she was a stranger to the beautiful domain—to every spot considered worthy of interest and admiration, seeming himself pleased, and interested by the gentle intelligent delight, with which his young companion—now that she was happy and at ease—entered into the spirit of everything around her; her first shyness wearing away, and her innocent re-assurance, being still more

effectually established after an encounter with her cousin and his intended. The enamoured pair reminded, for the first time of the charge they had neglected, by the sight of Mary, if they looked a little surprised at first, to see her thus accompanied, were evidently relieved by finding her in any way happily disposed of; and when playfully attacked by her protector for having so unfaithfully fulfilled their office to his fair charge, they answered in the same tone that Miss Seaham could not have found a better *chaperon* than her present companion. And then the handsome lovers, a more graceful pair at that time could not have been found, gaily kissed their hands, and pursued their flowery path—a path in which there surely seemed as yet to lurk no thorn.

“ It was the time of roses,
They plucked them as they passed.”

Thus again, left standing alone together, Mary's companion looked at her and smiled.

Mary too smiled, but she blushed also and said :
“ You see they will not take me off your hands ;
pray do not let me be in your way, but take
me to some lady of your acquaintance, who
will doubtless let me stay by her side.”

“ Not for the world !” was the earnest
rejoinder, “ at least if you are not tired of my
society. Dinner—to which you must allow
me the pleasure of conducting you—must,”
he added, looking at his watch, “ soon be
ready ; till then, let me show you the
aviary.”

And again he offered his arm, and led her in
that direction. After which, as she owned at
last to feeling a little tired, they seated them-
selves in the pavilion, where others of the
company were assembled, awaiting the banquet
to be given in the house. There was one
peculiarity about her companion which im-
pressed Mary at the time.

Though animated and lively in his manner
and discourse when he did speak, his words

were not many, whilst on the contrary the earnest, thoughtful interest with which he seemed to listen to every sentence proceeding from her mouth, trivial and simple as she considered them herself to be, at the same time as it encouraged and irresistibly flattered her modest pride, made her, nevertheless, wonder, and once or twice look up inquiringly into the dark eyes bent down so earnestly upon her face, as she gave utterance to any opinion or remark, as if to discover from what reason this might proceed.

She could not tell what attraction there often is in the simple-minded, guileless nature of a youthful being like herself, to the man plunged in the cares and passions of maturer years, and though Eugene Trevor, at that time was young—not more than five and twenty—a more experienced eye than Mary's might have discerned, *that* stamped upon his countenance, which told him to be, even then, no stranger to those dark storms of passion, or of secret

sin which, sweeping over man's breast, blight before its time the freshness, health, and purity of youth.

But how could Mary Seaham read all this? how should her guileless spirit divine the wild, dark thoughts—the sinful purposes, unspeakable, unspoken, which must even at that very time, like so many demons, have been working, suggesting, forming themselves within the soul of him who thus was seated by her unsuspecting side? And well for all of us, that thus it must ever be—

“For what if Heaven for once its searching light
Lent to some partial eye, disclosing all
The rude bad thoughts that in our bosoms' night
Wander at large, nor heed Love's gentle thrall;
Who would not shun the dreary uncouth place,
As if, fond leaning where her infant slept,
A mother's arm a serpent should embrace;
So might we friendless live—and die unblest.”

* * * * *

Yet Mary need not have wondered, even had it been given her, to look in less partial light upon the being who by his kindness and other fascinating qualities had so propitiated her sensitive, susceptible young heart.

Must the little brooklet wonder if the heated traveller, passing fiercely on his dusty way beneath the noon-day summer sun, consumed with inward fever and parching thirst, should turn with grateful delight to kneel and bow his head over its cool and limpid waters, blessing unawares the source of such pure refreshment.

But then, alas ! he rises like a giant refreshed to pursue his course of ambition, pleasure, sin to whichever of these that course may tend ; and what more does he think of that clear, pure stream, when quaffing freely of those turbid waters, from which at length the fevered votary is fain to slake his fiery thirst ?

And thou silly stream, to retain so long

the softened shadow of that dark image, which for one brief minute had been reflected on thy limpid bosom !

* * * *

It was then five years since the period of the little episode we have retrograded to relate, five years which had softly glided over Mary Seaham's head, in the almost uninterrupted retirement of her mountain home, and the simple enjoyments and pursuits this existence provided. Five years, which at her happy hopeful period of life, adds, oftener than detracts, from each charm either of mind or person—when, under such untried circumstances, the heart springs forward upon the wings of hope with freshness yet undiminished, and vigour unabated.

It was then between five and six years after, that Mary Seaham, on a summer eve found herself approaching her cousin's house in ——,

which place she had last visited with her sister, Lady Everingham, and from thence repaired to that fête which had proved no unimportant incident in her life.

CHAPTER V.

Then came the yearning of the exile's breast,
The haunting sound of voices far away,
And household steps.

HEMANS.

SILVERTON was a fine estate, and though the country in which it was situated was tame and unlovely in comparison with that to which she had been for so long accustomed, yet Mary Seaham was not so inveterate a mountaineer that she could look, as I know many do, upon the different aspect of the mother country, with the eye of utter aversion and distaste, and though she could not perhaps have gone so far as to agree with old Evelyn when he,

asserts Salisbury plain to be in his opinion, the part of Great Britain most worthy of admiration, yet for the gaze to be able to stretch unbounded over a level tract of cultivated land after having been long imprisoned within the massive confines of a mountainous district, she was not ashamed to own, there may be a certain degree of pleasurable relief.

But as may be supposed, any very critical survey of surrounding objects was at an end, when with that degree of nervousness ever more or less attending an arrival of this kind, she drew near the place of her destination in the carriage which had been sent to meet her. There was no one to receive her at the door when she alighted, but the servants, and its being near the dinner-hour, Mary concluded her cousins to have retired to their dressing-rooms. On making inquiries, however, to that effect she was informed that Mrs. de Burgh had not yet returned from her drive, and Mr. de Burgh was also from home.

Mary therefore accepted the offer of the civil domestic to be shown to the room prepared for her, and retired thither, not sorry to be able to rest awhile, after the fatigues of her long journey before a meeting with her relatives. Perhaps her spirits might be a little damped by the reception, or rather *non*-reception she had met with.

There is so much importance attached to a warm welcome, by those not well initiated in the careless frigidities of general society, that the very sensitive and inexperienced are often more chilled by any such accidental or habitual infringements on this score, than the occasion really requires.

We grow wiser or harder as we pass farther through the world, and learn to look upon it no longer as one large home of loving hearts, such as some may have accounted it; but a stage on which every man is too intent to play his own individual part, to have much respect for these minor charities of social life—the

word, the look of kindness, of affection which to the sensitive and unworldly spirit are often of higher price—contribute more to make up the sum of mortal happiness, than the most generous deed, or striking act of beneficence. We grow as we have before said, wiser or more callous, as we pass on through this world of our's—learn to see upon what principle society is founded, and cease to shrink chilled, and wounded, before each touch which falls coldly upon the warm surface of our too *exigente* heart—each unsympathetic glance which meets our wistful gaze.

Mary Seaham sat down by her window, which commanded a view of the carriage road, through the park, to watch for the return of her cousin's wife.

The evening was lovely, and she could not feel astonished that Mrs. de Burgh should have prolonged her drive. A cool freshness had succeeded the sultriness of the day, and she had perhaps not gone out till late.

The scene too on which Mary looked was pleasant and refreshing to the eye. The wide park with its troop of spotted deer, herding for the night beneath the luxuriant foliage of the trees, which in rich clumps or single majesty were scattered thickly over the demesne, gilded by the still bright but softened sunbeams.

But Mary Seaham was not quite able to enter into the enjoyment, which at any other time would have been amply afforded her.

She raised her eyes and began to feel a regretful longing for the sun-gilt or cloud capped mountains; which for so long had met her gaze, towering above the highest tree-tops of the Glan Pennant gardens—and then a sense of strangeness and desolation came creeping over her feelings.

For the first time she seemed to realize the true nature of her present position—and the sight of some labourers, wending their way across the by-paths from their daily toil, tended to bring her gathering sadness to a crisis.

"They are going home," she murmured, and a few tears stole gently down her cheeks. Then she thought of her sisters—the youngest, in particular, as most lately and intimately associated with her in sympathy and companionship, now so far divided, not only by distance, but by the different ties and interests of her new estate ; and then occurred to her the words she had so lately heard.

"Do you think you will find your cousin's house agreeable to you?" and she began to ask herself that question too, though not for the same reason, which had suggested the question to Mr. Temple—not lest it might prove too gay and worldly for her tastes and inclination, but by reason of the loneliness she might therein experience—that worst of loneliness—the loneliness of the heart, or,—

"She might meet with kindness and be lonely still,
For gratitude is not companionship."

Why then had she come here, would not

her sister Alice, have gladly opened her doors to receive her? And all the comparative inconvenience and discomfort of that arrangement, seemed to melt into insignificance before the other attractions of the picture suddenly conjured up. A sister's warm, and earnest welcome—the familiar family voice which would have greeted her, the tone of which at once would have made her feel at home, though in a strange land, amongst unfamiliar scenes and personages, whilst even the noisy delight of half-a-dozen nephews, and nieces, which would have celebrated her arrival, came before her fancy—as she sat in her silent solitary grandeur—in most alluring contrast with her present undemonstrative, though luxurious reception.

But no! she had been attracted by the urgent and pressing desire expressed in the letters of her cousins, to make their house her home until the return of her brother to England, and there had been something in the impression she had received, or the associations

connected with her memories of those relatives, that had moved her, perhaps with little reflection, to embrace the offer.

But now she is thinking on the fête of six years ago—of the urgent alacrity with which her cousin and his beautiful intended had then volunteered their protection and support, and their subsequent neglect and abandonment. Might not this incident be a type of what she had to expect, under her present circumstances?

She did not even, in this mood of dark imagining to which she had yielded herself, carry her thoughts beyond the point of her discomfiture on that occasion, or she might perhaps have had some dream analogous to the sequel, conjured up to brighten the gloom of her present anticipations.

But dreams of any nature came not just then to her relief. She had never felt so wide awake to dull reality, unrelieved but by the meek philosophy with which she determined

to make the best of everything relating to her present position, cheerfully and contentedly to submit herself to existing circumstances, keeping ever in view for her comfort the expected return of her much-loved brother from Canada, when whatever turn their fortunes might have taken, "for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer," so that brother wrote, the cherished picture of their early youth, might still be realized, and a home provided for his favourite sister, which at least would make her independent of the cold and heartless people of the world, till she found or desired a dearer or a better.

"Two things are left me for my destiny :

A world to rove o'er, and a home with thee."

* * * * *

Mary Seaham had just arrived at this point of her meditations, when her maid returned to say that Mr. de Burgh was in the house dressing for dinner, and to inquire whether

her young lady would not do the same. Mrs. de Burgh had not come home, but it was already past the usual dinner hour.

Miss Seaham proceeded accordingly to make the simple toilette she thought suited to the occasion, for she learnt from her maid that there was no company staying in the house, and then she determined to go down stairs, to have at least her interview over with her cousin Louis, whilst awaiting the arrival of her tardy hostess.

CHAPTER VI.

Alas! when angry words begin
Their entrance on the lip to win ;
When sullen eye and flushing cheek
Say more than bitterest tone could speak,
And look and word, than fire or steel,
Give wounds more deep—time cannot heal ;
And anger digs, with tauntings vain,
A gulf it may not pass again.

L. E. L.

Two little children—a fine girl of four and a delicate boy of three—were passing from the drawing-room, through the vestibule on their way to bed followed by a nurse. Mary Seaham would have stopped to make the acquaintance of her little cousins, but too eager in their

amusement, the noisy chase of one another through the long *suite* of rooms, they, like Jaques's careless herd, "jump along by her and never stay to greet her," in spite of the chiding injunctions of their attendant, to wait and speak to the young lady. And Mary walked on into the adjoining saloon.

There she found Mr. de Burgh standing alone, his elbow resting on the marble mantelpiece of the fireless grate, his eyes gazing fixedly through the opposite window.

He did not hear her noiseless approach over the velvet carpet; and she had time at the same moment that she recognized the unchanged, almost feminine beauty, of her cousin's handsome features, to remark no very promising expression, namely, one of dissatisfaction and annoyance, to be now seated on his countenance. It, however, brightened instantaneously, when he became aware of Mary's presence; and with the most affectionate cordiality, he advanced to meet and welcome

her to his house. Then seating her on an ottoman by his side, he made anxious inquiries as to her journey and the wedding of her sister, slightly touching upon other family matters, in which, as guardian and trustee to his young cousins, he was concerned. And thus, for awhile, his attention and thoughts seemed diverted from any previous cause of discontent. But his powers of interest or politeness seemed at length exhausted. He became evidently restless and fidgetty, cast sundry impatient, or as Mary was more likely to interpret them, anxious glances towards the window which commanded the same view across the park as she had been lately contemplating, and finally rising from his seat, resumed his former station near the chimney-piece, to watch, as Mary concluded, for the arrival of his truant lady.

Mr. de Burgh had only alluded to his wife's absence during their conversation, by casually mentioning her not having returned from her

drive ; but Mary Seaham, after noticing with rising sympathy and compassion, the increasing perturbation of her cousin's countenance, and naturally attributing its origin to the tender solicitation of an adoring husband, ventured, after a few minute's silence, in which Mr. de Burgh had been too much absorbed in his own feelings for common discourse, to express in her gentle voice, the hope, that he was not uneasy at her cousin Olivia's remaining out so late.

“ Uneasy ? Oh no ! ” Mr. de Burgh exclaimed, aroused by the question, and turning to the speaker with a careless laugh, “ Oh, no, not in the least uneasy ! I suppose I shall have the pleasure of seeing her back between this and bed-time. Oh no ! My present cause of uneasiness is merely at the thought that the dinner—for which about an hour ago I had considerable appetite—must be, by this time, fit only for the dogs to eat : and, also, that you ”—he added, softening his voice of irony into one of kind concern, observing probably, that his

cousin looked pale, grave, and exhausted, "that you, after your long journey, must be quite faint for want of nourishment; but it is just like her," he continued, in soliloquy, hastily walking to the window, "selfish, inconsiderate, careless of everybody, everything, but her own pleasure and amusement. But at all events," he added, "we'll have dinner, such as it is," and approaching the bell, he rang it impatiently, and desired that the dinner should be immediately served.

If Mary Seaham had looked pale and serious before, she was ten times more so after what she had heard. This outbreak of her cousin took her so by surprise. The bitter words he had spoken with regard to his wife, were in such direct unconformity, not only with anything she had been accustomed to hear from one relative towards another, but, also, with the picture her imagination had previously formed of the mutual happiness and affection of the married pair with whom she had come to

sojourn. She looked back to the devoted lovers in their wanderings through the flowery paths of courtship, devotion she had believed to be but a faint fore-shadowing of the full-crowned sacred bliss, the well-tried love, of a six years' union, such as she had expected it would be now her lot to witness. But those disdainful expressions, this disparaging declamation, came like an icy wreath upon her warm imaginings.

"Selfish!" "Inconsiderate!" Could her cousin's beautiful wife really merit such a character? Or was the accusation merely the casual effusion of a hungry husband's fretful humour. If this were not the case, it spoke indeed little for her own chance of comfort as that lady's guest. Still she was far less affected by any selfish interested consideration, than by the shock her inherent principles and pre-conceived ideas upon the subject had received.

Louis de Burgh remained too much engaged with his own inward dissatisfaction, for any further conversation; consequently, no more

words were spoken till dinner was announced, and then her cousin's arm, with something of revived cheerfulness, was offered to her, and they proceeded to the dining-room.

They were seated *tête-à-tête* at the table, and had not proceeded half way through the meal, which was far from justifying Mr. de Burgh's unpromising prognostications, when the sound of carriage wheels was heard, and a loud peal at the door bell denoted the expected arrival.

Mr. de Burgh made no demonstration of interest or excitement, but continued the occupation in which he was now pleasantly engaged in uninterrupted indifference. Mary, on the contrary, felt no slight degree of nervous trepidation, and laying down her knife and fork, awaited in anxious suspense the entrance of her other cousin.

In less than an instant, Mrs. de Burgh, in carriage costume, made her appearance followed by a gentleman.

"Well, here we are at last," she exclaimed, rushing in with careless abruptness, "and Mary arrived, I declare!" she added, with immediate change of tone, "well, I *am* shocked! I really had imagined that you could not be here till nightfall. But welcome a thousand times!" she continued, advancing with extended hands, and embracing her with an affectionate warmth which almost brought tears into Mary's eyes.

"The fact is," she continued after a few other inquiries, and having thrown her bonnet aside, and put back the ringlets from her face—flushed and heated to a very brilliant hue by the exertions of a hurried drive—she seated herself to partake of the dinner reproduced for herself and her companion. "The fact is, I have really been engaged in your service, for feeling sure you would be horrified to come out of the wilds of Wales, to find us here in as stupid and uncivilized a state of reclusiveness as any of the natives

of Kamschatka — though, for what I know,” she parenthized with a laugh, “*they* may have much more society of their kind — feeling sure, however, of the dullness of this place, I determined to drive my ponies as far as Morland, and see if I could beat up a few recruits from the party assembled there, for your enlivenment.”

Mary smiled and blushed, hardly knowing how to answer this speech.

“*I* am a person,” continued Mrs. de Burgh, “who *can* exert myself a little for the sake of my friends—who *am* willing to take some slight trouble, unconnected with my own tastes and inclinations; to consider that a young lady *may* possibly require a little more amusement than seeing trees cut down — a little more society than a man, his wife and two children.”

Mary remarked the flashing eyes of Mrs. de Burgh directed towards her husband, as she made this latter speech with much of

marked significance in her look and tone ; and with the very contradictory charges brought against the absent wife by Mr. de Burgh fresh in her memory, she would, if she had deemed it smiling matter, have been inclined to smile to see the table thus turned upon him.

Perhaps her cousin was not himself quite unimpressed or unconvicted in his conscience by the unconscious retort, for colouring slightly, and for the first time directly addressing his wife since her entrance, though he had entered into some conversation with the gentleman by his side, he said with a not ill-natured, though somewhat provoking laugh, which nevertheless displayed to great advantage his set of ivory teeth.

“ Well, Olivia, pray, the next time let your *unselfish consideration*,” with a stress on the latter words, “ be a little more considerately timed. To keep a tired guest waiting for her dinner till nearly nine o’clock—for you knew as well as I did, that she was sure to

arrive before seven—whilst you are scouring the country in search of people to say pretty things to her on the morrow, is a specimen of attentive consideration, which at least was not dreamt of before in my philosophy.”

“No of course not,” was the contemptuous reply, “though perhaps Mary Seaham may see the circumstance in a different light, supposing that dinner, as she is a reasonable being, is not quite so important and paramount a point in her existence as in yours. But why you waited for me I cannot tell. You are not usually so painfully polite. I suppose you wanted to show off to the utmost, the great inconsideration which marks my conduct towards yourself and others, and the excessive consideration of your own.”

How distressing and astounding all this was to Mary’s feelings may be imagined, more especially from being herself made so prominent an object in the debate.

In the first agitation of the meeting, what with the grateful and gratified surprise which

the unexpected warmth of her reception had inspired, and subsequently her attention and interest being so much absorbed by her newly arrived cousin, on whose unchanged beauty she could not refrain from dwelling in unfeigned admiration—her opposite neighbour who sat with his back to the now declining light had almost entirely escaped her notice; but now, as with downcast eyes and flushing cheeks, she sat listening in painful embarrassment to this conjugal *tirade*, it occurred to her to lift a timid glance to discern how her fellow-sufferer bore the infliction to which they were mutually exposed. She raised her eyes, therefore, and having done so, that very timid glance was rivetted, and became gradually changed into a gaze of earnest, calm surprise, for as she gazed the indistinctness of the vision seemed to clear away, and the face of him whose kindness had been once so strongly impressed upon her girlish fancy to be revealed to her astonished sight.

The same dark eyes fixed with interest upon

her changeful countenance, that very same peculiar smile which he had turned towards her, when they were left standing alone together on the occasion of her second *cavalier* abandonment, by the self-absorbed lovers—seemed to mark his observation of the discomfiture which the startling contrast now exhibited had caused her. A smile—such as moves one to look again, and observe with curious interest the countenance from whence it emanates—in much the same way as one would look upon a book of strange characters, whose mystic language we feel certain could we but read it aright, would unto us a tale unfold of more than common import.

But, setting aside the interest which this unexpected recognition inspired—the encouragement that smile, as on the former occasion just mentioned, tended to convey — Mary Seaham felt—considering the many secret thoughts and feelings which in her idle moments she had once wasted on this—the

almost, it might be said, ideal hero of her imagination—wonderfully little affected by the fact of his real substantial embodiment—not more so perhaps, than one might be who awakens from a series of fanciful dreams to see the object who has played therein the most fantastic and highly coloured part, standing, divested of all supernatural and exaggerated characteristics, before his eyes ; and with a smile, almost as quiet and confiding as the one with which she had yielded herself to his guidance six years before in the grounds of Morland, she had acknowledged the recognition, ere Mrs. de Burgh, after an angry pause and a killing glance across the table—provoked by her husband's mortifying contradiction of her assertion respecting the knowledge she had entertained of the hour of her guest's arrival (a glance which was probably intended to convey to his conviction how extremely odious an individual she deemed him)—recovered sufficiently to proceed with her relation in the same lively strain.

"I was not very successful," she continued. "Of course, every body is in London ; however, I have the promise of a reinforcement in a day or two. In the meantime, determined not to return empty-handed, I pressed this gentleman—whom I found just about to start home-wards—into my service, and brought him—I cannot say a willing captive—chained to my triumphant car. Nay, I am glad you are beginning to be ashamed of your conduct," she added, as the accused party, looking at Mary, attempted a smiling refutation of the charge.

"Ah, yes, we will imagine what you would bring forth as your excuse—that you did not expect *such* a young lady, for you know I told you there *was* a young lady in the case, that you cannot deny. Well, Mary and I will forgive you, now you are here, if you will only stay, and withal — make yourself extremely agreeable—but, bye the bye, I ought to introduce you to one another—how very

forgetful of me! Miss Mary Seaham or rather Miss Seaham now, I believe I should say — Eugene Trevor.”

And Mary Seaham and Eugene Trevor exchanged another smile, as they slightly bent their heads in acknowledgement of the ceremony, but both at the same time murmuring their declaration of a previous acquaintance.

“Indeed!” exclaimed Mrs. de Burgh, with some surprise, “when and where could you have possibly met?”

“You forget the fête at Morland, when you so cruelly abandoned Miss Seaham to her fate, whilst you and Louis,” with a little covered malice in his tone, “went love-making.”

“Ah! to be sure, I do remember something of the kind,” rejoined Mrs. de Burgh, “that is to say, of you two being together, but that is so very long ago,” she added, in a tone of marked carelessness, and glancing at her husband.

“Not quite six years,” said Mary.

"*Only* six years !" interposed Mr. de Burgh, blandly, "I should have imagined it sixteen."

"And I too," rejoined the wife colouring ; "but at any rate," she continued, with affected carelessness, "it has been quite long enough to have almost effaced from my mind the impression—almost the recollection of things then existing—you two it seems," glancing from Mary to Mr. Trevor, "have better memories."

Mr. de Burgh retorted with a beautiful smile ; that the tablets of their memories had happily been kept apart during that interregnum, that there was nothing like six years of close contact for rubbing out old impressions.

"And then in that space of time," he added, probably with more secret meaning than the not very original remark expressed, "and then in six years, a great deal of change may have taken place."

"A great deal indeed !" was almost unconsciously echoed by Mary's lips, as her thoughts silently wandered over the domestic changes and

family events which coloured her reminiscences of that intervening period, whilst from the soft pensive expression which stole over her countenance, it might have seemed that it was more a soothing relief to take refuge from "the strife of tongues" in the private sanctuary of thought thus suggested, than that any very sharp pang of sadness or regret was roused by this reflection.

"A great deal certainly!" had echoed instinctively from Eugene Trevor's lips. But why has the smile with which he lightly commenced the words, faded away like a gleam of sunshine, from the dark hill side, ere they died upon his lips, what were the suggested thoughts, the awakened recollections he would have wished diverted? What record did the history of these six years inscribe on the tablets of his memory?

What ever it might be, he did not pause to contemplate it long; but pouring himself out a glass of wine, drank it down hastily, as if the ruddy draught could wash away the unrepented sin; the unatoned iniquity of his secret soul—

then looked and spoke as unconsciously as before.

“Each mind has indeed,” as it has been ably written, “an interior apartment into which none but itself and the divinity can enter. In this secluded place, the passions fluctuate and mingle in unknown agitation. Here all the fantastic, and all the tragic shapes of imagination have a haunt—where they can neither be invaded or discerned. Here projects, convictions, vows, are confusedly scattered, and the records of past life are laid; and here in solitary state, sits conscience surrounded by her own thunders which sometimes sleep, and sometimes roar, while the world knows it not.”

We said or quoted something to the same effect in a preceding chapter, and added—that it was well that it should be so.

CHAPTER VII.

There are some moments in our fate
That stamp the colour of our days.

* * * * *

And mine was sealed in the slight gaze
Which fixed my eye, and fired my brain,
And bowed my head beneath the chain.

L. E. L.

MRS. DE BURGH soon after led Mary to the drawing-room, when all that was kind and affectionate, and calculated to reassure her young guest's mind, with regard to her previously conceived misgivings, was expressed by the former lady.

They were, however—owing probably to the

lateness of the hour, soon joined by the gentlemen.

Mr. de Burgh immediately sat down by his cousin's side, and, as if with the intention of making himself more thoroughly agreeable than circumstances had previously permitted, he entered into animated discourse, in which, finding Mary perfectly able to sustain a competent and intelligent part, he had speedily passed from the merits and beauty of his children, and such like natural easy points of discussion, to some improvements in the grounds, in which his interest seemed to be at present much engrossed, showing more scientific and general information on the whole than she had previously conceived him to possess; — he, appearing on his part pleased to find so willing and intelligent a listener in his young lady cousin.

Mrs. de Burgh in the meantime had, soon after the conversation commenced between them, called Eugene Trevor away to the open

window, and conversed with him at intervals in a low, confidential voice, whilst turning over a pile of new music lying on the ottoman by her side.

At last she called out to Mary, and asked her if she sung.

Mary replied in the negative, but remembering well the beautiful voice possessed by Mrs. de Burgh before her marriage, she rose with glad alacrity to solicit a song from her.

Mrs. de Burgh, whose question probably had been but a note of preparation for her own projected performance, smiled compliance with the request, and proceeded to the piano, whilst Mary, ensconcing herself in a quiet nook between the piano and window, yielded her senses to the soothing enjoyment which poetry and melody conjoined always afforded them; and Mrs. de Burgh sung that evening only English songs, with a beauty and pathos perfectly enchanting.

“My spirit like a charmed bark doth swim
Upon the liquid waves of thy sweet singing,
Far away into the regions dim of rapture,
As a boat with swift sail winging
Its way adown some many-winding river.”

Many an evening Mary sat in that same place, and listened with never-tiring pleasure to the same delightful songs, but never perhaps with such pure, unmingled pleasure as had this sweet music on the present occasion inspired her.

“Softest grave of a thousand fears,
Where their mother care, like a drowsy child,
Is laid asleep in flowers.”

Once, at the close of a peculiarly beautiful ballad, she lifted up her eyes, those “down-falling eyes, full of dreams and slumber,” now gemmed with a delicious tear, to encounter the dark orbs of Eugene Trevor, as he stood shaded from the light, in the deep embrasure of the window.

“You are very fond of music,” he said,

coming forward with a smile, on finding his earnest gaze thus discovered.

"Oh, very fond indeed!" Mary replied, with a low sigh, which marked perhaps the spell of musical enchantment to have been broken by the question, or it may be—the moment when some other power first fell upon her spirit.

"Though who can tell

What time the angel passed who left the spell?"

"Very fond indeed," she continued; "but who is there that is not fond of music?"

"That man for one," answered Mrs. de Burgh, turning quickly round, and denoting by her glance "that man" to be Eugene Trevor. "He is not, I can assure you; he cannot distinguish one note from another—a nightingale's from a jackdaw's. I believe my singing is the greatest infliction I could put upon him. Can you deny this?"

"Oh, if you choose to give me such a character to Miss Seaham, I can have nothing to say against it, of course. I only hope she will not judge me accordingly."

And Eugene Trevor laughed, and looked again at Mary.

"It is to be hoped not, indeed," chimed in Mr. de Burgh, who, as it seemed, had become by this time tired of remaining *hors de combat*, in the back-ground, and now came forward to join the trio; "for does not Shakespeare say:

"'The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils;
The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
And his affections dark as Erebus.
Let no such man be trusted—'"

He just glanced at Eugene Trevor, who, however, did not seem to have paid any particular attention to this severe commentary on his want of taste—then, with a smile at Mary, who also smiled most unconsciously upon his

declamation—proceeded to exonerate himself from any share in such dark imputations, by joining his wife in a duet she placed carelessly before him on the desk, and in which, for the first time that evening, Mary had the satisfaction of hearing the voices of the married pair, blended in notes and tones of harmony and love.

At its conclusion, Mrs. de Burgh quickly arose, declaring that they had been very cruel in keeping Mary up so long, and that she must go to bed immediately. Candles accordingly were lighted, and Mrs. de Burgh, before wishing Eugene Trevor good night, impressed upon him again, her orders that he should not desert them on the morrow.

Mr. Trevor shook his head, saying his father would expect him; but that, at any rate, he need not go early, so they could talk about it in the morning, and he shook hands with both ladies in adieu. Mrs. de Burgh accompanied Mary to her room, where, after lingering a little to see that she had everything that she could

want to minister to her comfort, she left the pale and now really-wearied traveller to her needful repose. But though somewhat subdued by bodily fatigue, Mary, having humbly knelt and lifted up her heart in prayers of devout gratitude for the mercy which had not only preserved her in safety through her journey, but "brought her to see her habitation in peace, and find all things according to her heart's desire," lay down with a mind divested of much of those gloomy misgivings, which had troubled her spirit on her first arrival.

Was it alone the kindness her cousins had shown her that produced this magic change? Perhaps so, for Mary was just at that age, and more still, of that disposition when a word—a look—the most imperceptible influence suffices to change the whole aspect of existence.

"Even as light

Mounts o'er a cloudy ridge, and all is bright,

From east to west one thrilling ray,

Turning a wintry world to May."

But she did not long remain awake to analyze her own sensations on the subject. The echo of Olivia's "sweet" singing seemed to lull her senses to repose, and she sank asleep to fancy herself again standing with Mr. Temple on the hill-side heath.

At first Mr. Temple it seemed to be, till turning, she thought her companion's form and face had changed into those of Mr. Trevor. And pain, trouble, and perplexity were the impressions produced by the circumstance upon her dreamy senses.

The same hand that had so lately pressed hers so gently on bidding her "good night," was now in her dream wringing it with the fervent emotion, which had marked her rejected lover's sorrowful farewell, till finally she was awakened from her first light slumber, by finding herself repeating aloud in soliloquy these strangely suggested words : "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau !"

CHAPTER VIII.

Oh ! she is guileless as the birds
That sing beside the summer brooks ;
With music in her gentle words,
With magic in her winsome looks ;

With kindness like a noiseless spring
That faileth ne'er in heat or cold ;
With fancy like the wild dove's wing,
As innocent as it is bold.

WORDSWORTH.

FORTUNATELY for Mary Seaham's health and spirits, the following day, she was troubled with no more such bewildering dreams throughout the remainder of that night, and

when the bright sun streamed in upon her through the window, thrown open by her maid, she woke up cheerful and refreshed. Accustomed at home to early rising, she found herself on going down stairs—though it was later than her usual hour—the only one of the party who seemed to have made their appearance. Hearing, however, children's voices on the lawn, looking from the window of the breakfast-room which she had entered, she stepped forth, and seeing the little boy and girl sporting amongst the flowers, she made a more successful attempt upon their notice than she had done on a previous occasion. Attracted by her sweet looks, her gentle youthful manner and appearance, the little people soon accorded to her their full confidence and favour, and gambolled in her path or led her by the hand to point out some gay butterfly or beautiful flower, with the same reliance and satisfaction as they would have bestowed upon a new playfellow or long-established friend, whilst—

“In virgin fearlessness—with step which seemed
Caught from the pressure of elastic turf—
Upon the mountains gemmed with morning dew,
In the full prime of sweetest scents and flowers—”

Mary yielded to their capricious guidance, walking by their side, and entering with playful interest into their childish amusements and pursuits.

We have not yet described our heroine as to her personal appearance; and some may ask if she were beautiful, or, as we have never hinted at any such decided perfection, they may more shrewdly divine her, from all they have put together, to have been more pleasing and attractive, and pretty perhaps—than beautiful. And at any other time, perhaps merely taking into consideration the long dark grey eyes with their drooping eye-lids such as I have before portrayed, the soft brown hair braided on a fair and open brow; the other features, which, whether regular or not, breathed a softness and an intellect combined, which disarmed

criticism, to say nothing of her figure, which, a little above the middle height, light and pliant as became a mountain maid, might have seemed nevertheless, by her movements and habitual carriage, to denote it governed by a soul within, as much, if not more conspicuously inclined to *Il penseroso* than *Il allegro*; but these two so nicely combined, so delicately intermingled, so harmoniously playing one upon the other, that it was hard to separate or distinguish them apart.

“Serious and thoughtful was her mind,
Yet by reconciliation exquisite and rare.”

All this taken together, and I might perhaps have conceded to the supposition and replied,

“She was not fair nor beautiful—
Those words express her not.”

Mary had never hitherto been much considered in the family, as far as good looks were concerned. The mountain breezes which had

dyed with such brilliant bloom her sisters' cheeks, had failed to chase the clear paleness of her own complexion; and therefore those around her who adhered to the usual vulgar idea of beauty, had never thought of giving her equality in that respect,—with the exception perhaps of the good Baronet, who on the principle of “loving others different to oneself,” had first coveted the pale violet above the brighter flowers of the family, as in pleasing contrast to his own ruddy hues,—and by him whose refined perception had, as we know long since, discerned and singled out the pearl of great price from the more glittering jewels of the sisterhood.

But as we see her standing before us at this moment, in her delicately tinted attire, watching with a quiet smile of admiring interest the pretty children, who have bounded away together a little in advance—or lifting up her eyes toward the blue sky above, seeming to drink in with a pure and lively sense of

rapture, the delight of that most beautiful of summer mornings—

“A morn for life in its most subtle luxury.”

Standing thus, unconscious that human eye was upon her, to have seen her with that glow of youth and hope, and innocent intellectual enjoyment kindling her cheek, few could have looked coldly upon her, and said or thought “she was not fair or beautiful.”

Very fair at least she seemed to him, who from an upper chamber window thrown open to cool the fever of his brow, looked down upon this morning scene, and dwelt upon that living object, pleasant and alluring to the thirsting of his heart—the thirsting for that something, purer, holier than his own nature could supply—which sometimes springs up within the soul of him who has wandered farthest from the paths of innocency and peace.

Mary was talking to her cousin Louis, who first joined her on the lawn, when Mrs. de

Burgh and Eugene Trevor made their appearance. The latter congratulated Mary when they sat down to breakfast, on her having apparently so completely recovered from her last night's fatigue, and mentioned his having seen her in the garden from his window.

She blushed, and said she had been making acquaintance with the dear little children, whose praises she then rung upon the father and mother's ears. Mr. de Burgh looked delighted, and quite agreed upon the subject, his lady said more carelessly: "They were nice little monkeys; the girl good-looking enough, but getting to that dreadful age when she would require teaching; the boy a puny little fellow, who should be at the sea if everything was done for him that ought to be done."

Whereupon, Mr. de Burgh, who took this remark—probably as it was intended to be—as a reflection upon his own backwardness in forwarding that arrangement, began an assurance, in way of defence, of Doctor somebody's

preference of his native country's air to that of the seaside ; adding, that it would do the boy much more good to have that long hair cut off which was exhausting all his strength. Mrs. de Burgh declared that he was welcome to have it cut off, for what she cared, for he knew she never interfered in any of his whims, however absurd they might be.

And so it went on for a short time, till Mary began to wonder if every repast was to be seasoned by such agreeable accompaniments, as the bickerings of this and the preceding conversations. But Eugene Trevor, who seemed to be accustomed to this sort of thing, managed, laughingly, to divert the conversation from this exciting topic, and peace was accordingly restored during the remainder of the meal.

But how wonderful it was to Mary, that those two beings, whom nature, as well as fortune, seemed to have crowned with every blessing their bounty can bestow to make this world a paradise—health, beauty, talents,

on the one hand ; wealth, station, princely possessions on the other—should awaken in her mind feelings of pain and compassion, rather than envy or admiration—as apparently lacking in so lamentable a degree, that first great ingredient in the cup of life—*love*.

How had this come to pass—how had the precious drop been banished from the draught they were about so joyously to quaff, and which seemed to sparkle with such glittering lustre when she had seen them last ?

Yet the same changeless heaven was above their heads—and earth should have been to them a still more thornless paradise.

Alas ! Mary had not learnt to see by sad experience, how often this is the case with hearts that have once loved with—it might have seemed undying fervour ; affection frittered irreclaimably away in the caprice and wantonness of unbroken prosperity,

“ Hearts that the world in vain had tried,
And sorrow but more closely tied.”

Who stood the storms when waves were rough,
Yet in a sunny hour fall off,
Like ships which have gone down at sea,
When heaven was all serenity."

* * * * *

Soon after breakfast Mary went up stairs to write to her aunt and uncle, then returned and sat with Mrs. de Burgh till luncheon time, when the gentlemen rejoined them, and after that they all went out together—that is to say Mr. Trevor and the two ladies, for Mr. de Burgh soon left the party, to follow his own business and pursuits.

They visited the garden, the green-houses, strolled through some of the most shady and picturesque parts of the grounds, conversing pleasantly the while; and then, rather wearied by their exertions, were about to place themselves on a seat, beneath the cool shadow of some magnificent trees, not far from the house, when a servant was seen approaching to inform Mrs.

de Burgh that visitors were in the drawing-room; the Countess of Patterdale, and the Ladies Marchmont.

Mrs. de Burgh made a gesture expressive of distaste at this disturbance, but walked towards the house. Mary did not think it incumbent upon her to volunteer her assistance in the entertainment of these strangers, so remained behind; and a few moments after, she saw Eugene Trevor, who had accompanied his cousin across the lawn, coming back to rejoin her.

"You see I have followed your example, Miss Seaham," he said, sitting down beside her, "and have made my escape. Life is too short, in my opinion, for mortals to be shut up in a room this hot afternoon, making themselves agreeable to three fashionable fine ladies."

"But it is rather hard upon Olivia," Mary said, with a smile.

"Oh, not at all. She is quite equal to the

task. A match for all the fine ladies in the land—are you?”

“Oh, no!” Mary answered laughing, “not at all; I have had so little experience in that way.”

“Ah, well! Olivia is quite in her element amongst them; her real delight is a London season, where she can play that part to perfection: unfortunately de Burgh’s inclinations do not tend that way, particularly now that he has this improving mania upon him.”

“It is unfortunate that their tastes in this respect do not agree,” Mary rejoined.

“Very unfortunate,” he repeated, regarding his companion with the marked interest and attention her simplest expressions or observation seemed to inspire; a peculiarity which, as it had in earlier years excited her wonder, now made as strong though somewhat more undefined impression on her feelings.

The effect it produced was, however, far from being one to embarrass or constrain—on

the contrary, there almost might have seemed to be some soothing power—some magnetic influence in this “serious inclination” on the part of Eugene Trevor; for never, with a less unreserved and uncommunicative companion, had she felt more at ease; had her own thoughts and feelings been drawn forth with such freedom and unconstraint. And a calm and pleasant conversation had been carried on between them for nearly three-quarters of an hour before Mrs. de Burgh reappeared, complaining of the length of time her visitors had remained.

Mary did not say anything, though it seemed to her that the complaint was somewhat unreasonable; but Eugene Trevor scrupled not to declare, that he never knew these people pay so short a visit before.

“Ah, it is very well for you to say so, and Mary to think the same,” Mrs. de Burgh said, looking rather curiously from one to the other. “You two sitting here so comfortably; but it

was very cruel of you both to let me have the whole burden, you Eugene should really have come and taken the Ladies Marchmont off my hands. I had a good mind to bring them out here, just to spite you."

"I am glad you did not," said Eugene Trevor, "or I should have been obliged to run away, as it is necessary that I should do now, my dog-cart having been waiting for me, I believe, more than an hour in the yard."

"What! are you really going?" exclaimed Mrs. de Burgh.

"Yes, my father will fidget himself to death if I do not arrive," was the reply.

"Well, come again as soon as you can."

"Oh yes, you may rely upon that. Good bye," and shaking hands with Mary and his cousin, he left them, and was soon driving rapidly through the park.

"You will find it very dull I am afraid, Mary," Mrs. de Burgh said, as, having

watched this departure, she turned slowly to re-enter the house ; “ but I hope we shall have some people to-morrow.”

Mary earnestly deprecated such an idea, and with the utmost sincerity. She felt perfectly contented and happy all that evening, particularly as there was very tolerable harmony kept up between her cousins.

Mr. de Burgh inquired at dinner, though with no great interest “ what had become of Trevor ? ” Mrs. de Burgh answered that he had been obliged to go home to his father who seemed to be in one of those fidgetty moods, when he could not bear to be left alone ; and Mary asked very simply if he had no other child ?

“ Yes—no—that is to say,” hesitated Mrs. de Burgh, looking at her husband, “ one son died a few years ago.”

“ And the other—” proceeded Mr. de Burgh, as his wife did not carry on the reply—but some authoritative look or sign from

Mrs. de Burgh which he seemed to have received, interrupted his intended information, and only murmuring "Nonsense!" he was silent on the subject.

"I must drive you over to Montrevor, some day," said Mrs. de Burgh, addressing Mary; "the place is well worth seeing."

"I don't agree in that at all," Mr. de Burgh remarked testily—"at least, not worth knocking up the ponies by so long a drive. What should you take Mary there for? The old man will not greatly appreciate the visit, and I do not think there is any other consideration to make it a desirable excursion."

Mrs. de Burgh shrugged her shoulders; but as if it was not a subject she wished brought under discussion, she allowed it to drop for the present.

CHAPTER IX.

You first called my woman's feelings forth,
And taught me love, ere I had dreamed love's name—
I loved unconsciously. . . .
At last I learned my heart's deep secret.

L. E. L.

MRS. DE BURGH's expedition the preceding day did not prove without its fruits. For the next few days, several idle young men of the neighbourhood, who had nothing better to do, came dropping in to dine or stay a night or so at Silverton.

Mr. de Burgh received these guests with much courtesy and kindness ; though apparently

regarding them as the visitors of his wife, he left them almost entirely to her entertainment, and went about his private occupation as usual with a scientific friend of his own, who arrived at this time.

As for Mary, although obliged, considering that this gathering had been formed chiefly on her account, to show her sense of the attention by making herself as agreeable as possible, yet before long she began to feel her exertions in that respect a weariness, rather than a pleasurable excitement ; and that her powers were not equal when placed in competition with the light and careless spirits around her. Indeed, so gladly would she hail the intervals which set her at liberty, to read, or think, or dream, free from such demands, that she began to suspect very soon that her thirstings after society would easily be satisfied, and that Mr. Temple need not have been alarmed lest she should be too much ensnared by its fascinations ; in short, that she was not so sociably inclined in a general

way to the degree for which she had given herself credit.

One morning, Mary made her escape about an hour before luncheon from the gay party by whom, since breakfast, she had been surrounded ; and seated herself, with a new book of poetry, at the open window of a room leading into a little garden, the luscious perfume of whose flowers were wafted sweetly upon her senses ; shaded by the light drapery of the muslin curtains, the sound of laughing, talking, billiard-balls falling at an undisturbing distance from her ear—

“ Oh, close your eyes and strive to see
The studious maid with book on knee ! ”

Mary had not long luxuriated in this enjoyment, when a footstep sounded on the grass without, and a dark shadow obscured the bright light upon her page. Lifting up her eyes, she saw Eugene Trevor standing before her.

He smiled at her start of surprise, and apologised for the abrupt intrusion. He had expected, he stated, to have found her and his cousin Olivia in this, Mrs. de Burgh's usual morning-room; and then Mary—the bright glow with which, although not naturally nervous, this sudden apparition had coloured her cheek, fading gradually away—told him how Mrs. de Burgh was engaged in the adjoining room.

“And you have deserted her?” he said, taking up the book she had laid down and examining its contents with the greatest apparent interest, though he only smiled when she asked him if he were fond of poetry, smiled—and answered, looking into her face, “Some kind,” and replaced the volume; then resting against the window-sill, they conversed on other subjects, and were still thus engaged when luncheon was announced.

Eugene Trevor stayed at Silverton that day and part of the next: when all the rest of the

party took their departure, with the exception of Mr. de Burgh's own particular friend.

But, somehow or other, Mary had by this time begun to change her mind, and to think—that after all she might be rather fond of society.

One circumstance a little surprised and puzzled her, before she had been very long at Silverton.

One day, when speaking of Wales, she carelessly mentioned Mr. Temple's name, and alluded to the college acquaintance that gentleman had professed to have once subsisted between himself and Mr. de Burgh. But Mr. de Burgh remembered no person of that name, answering to the slight description she attempted to give—could not the least recall him to his recollection, and as Mrs. de Burgh and Eugene Trevor, who happened to be present, did not seem able to assist his memory in that respect—though Mary also remembered Mr. Temple to have claimed

acquaintance with Mrs. de Burgh's family, she did not press the point; a certain conscious embarrassment associated with the object of discussion preventing her from entering into further particulars, though she thought the circumstance rather strange and unaccountable.

Her aunt and uncle mentioned in their first letter that Mr. Temple had called to see them, and had seemed much interested to hear of her safe arrival at Silverton; but those relatives did not remain in Wales more than a week or two after her own departure, therefore with them, intelligence regarding that most remarkable—and to her, now peculiarly interesting—person must cease, at least for the time being, she having no other correspondents at present in the neighbourhood.

* * * * *

Beyond such occasional gatherings as the one just described, there was very little of what

could be strictly called company, during the ensuing month—July—at Silverton ; and Mary sometimes smiled to think of the exaggerated idea Mr. Temple seemed to have formed, concerning the dangers to which she might be exposed in the evil world she was about to encounter. Yet how did Mary know whether the weapon of danger he most deprecated on her account, might not even then be hanging singly over her head, rendered only still more perilous by the absence of other exciting and diverting circumstances.

We said there was not much actual company at Silverton ; but besides an intimate friend or two of Mr. de Burgh's, Eugene Trevor often made his appearance to luncheon, or to dine and spend a night, so that it became at last quite a habit of Mrs. de Burgh's to say in the morning, if they had lost sight of him for many days together :

“ I wonder if Eugene Trevor will turn up to-day !”

And often did Mary find herself seated near her chamber window, her eye directed with feelings very far removed from those uneasy thoughts, which had arisen in her mind the first evening she had there taken up her position—her eyes directed across the park, along which perchance the sound of carriage wheels, having previously reached her ears, she might soon behold Eugene Trevor's well-appointed turn-out, with the fine blood horse, urged by its impatient master, advancing at a flying pace towards the house; and then with what ingenuous pleasure would Mary hasten to make her prettiest toilette, now that there was one who, she could not but flatter herself, would be far from indifferent to its effect. Mr. de Burgh, though there might have appeared to be no particular cordiality existing between him and his wife's cousin, never by word or manner testified any distaste to the frequency of these visits, indeed seemed to concern himself very little on the subject.

•

At length, however, he did say one day, on Mrs. de Burgh remarking Eugene's absence to have been a somewhat longer one than usual: "Well! what of that? It would really seem as if it was impossible to exist a day without Eugene Trevor. Are *you* so very fond of this wonderful Eugene, Mary?"

Poor Mary! this direct question took her quite by surprise, and she was unable immediately to reply.

Mrs. de Burgh came to her rescue. "Oh, never mind him, Mary," she said; "he only abuses Eugene Trevor because he is my relation, and objects to his coming here because he knows he is the only person I care for at all, excepting you Mary, who has entered the house this summer, whilst these tiresome scientific friends of his infest the place continually."

"Well, at any rate I am very glad," Mary was able now to say with a quiet smile, mingled perhaps with a little inward *pique* towards her cousin, "that you do not turn

the tables upon Louis by objecting to *his* relations."

"Ah, Mary!" said Mr. de Burgh with his most amiable smile, "are you too taking up the cudgels against me? but I was not aware that I did abuse or object to any one."

"Poor Eugene! no wonder he is glad to come over here as often as he can; it must be terribly dull for him at Montrevor with that old man," rejoined Mrs. de Burgh.

"Then why does he stay?" inquired her husband.

"Why—why—you know Mr. Trevor is ill and cannot bear him to be away. Eugene's kindness and dutiful behaviour in that respect is an excellent trait in his character, you must confess."

"Dutiful behaviour!" murmured Mr. de Burgh rather scornfully, as he walked away. "Pooh, nonsense! Epsom was a failure, and Goodwood remains to be proved."

* * * * *

One of the reasons which had furnished Mr. de Burgh with an excuse for remaining quietly at Silverton all that season, and perhaps had much to do in reconciling his wife to the arrangement, was the fact of Mrs. de Burgh's situation, promising an addition to their family in the early part of the winter; and as the heir was far from being a strong child, the chance of other healthy sons was most acceptable. Therefore, more care than the gay young wife had ever taken of herself, on previous occasions, was rendered desirable.

"Yes!" Mrs. de Burgh said one day, when she was driving with Mary, in allusion to these above-mentioned expectations, "I have been patient all through this season in consequence, although it is provoking that Louis should so selfishly spend his time, interest, and fortune, in the improvement, as he calls it, of this property; of one thing, however, I am quite

certain, that he will soon tire of the pursuit, leave everything half done, and take some other quirk into his head, which, no doubt, will be equally tiresome—build a yacht perhaps, and station me and the children at Cowes ; whilst he amuses himself with this new toy, and then is astonished at my being discontented, and amusing myself as I best may. Oh, Mary !” she added, “ when you marry, never give way to your husband’s selfishness in the first instance, or you will find it annihilating at the last.”

“ Did *you* give way ?” inquired Mary, with some archness.

Mrs. de Burgh laughed.

“ No, I cannot exactly say I did,” she replied. “ I had not the slightest idea that Louis would ever have any will but mine ; of course, he gave me reason to suppose so before we married ; but ere the honeymoon was over, I found out my mistake. Anything that did not interfere with his own pleasure, or incon-

venience, I was at liberty to do; but that was not what I wanted. I expected him to be the slave of my slightest wish."

"But was not that somewhat unreasonable?" suggested Mary.

"It certainly proved a mistake; and so we soon began to pull different ways, and I suppose will do so to the end of the chapter."

"Oh, my dear Olivia, how can you talk thus, when you and Louis ought—and do really, I am sure—so to love one another?" Mary exclaimed, feeling shocked and sorry.

"Humph! it does not signify much what we ought to do, or what lies *perdue*, when daily and hourly experience makes us most feelingly act and speak to the contrary. As for Louis, the quiet, unresisting manner in which he has allowed me to do things other husbands would have soon prevented, contenting himself with a few cutting words and sneering inuendoes, does not speak much for the depth of his affection. But the fact is, there is not much

depth of any kind in Louis's nature—no strength—no firmness of feeling or purpose—nothing to lay hold of except the whim of the moment, and that melts away before you can get a very sure grasp.

“ ‘ One foot on land and one on sea,
To one thing constant never.’ ”

Although it was somewhat repulsive to Mary's ideas and principles to hear a wife thus critically expose the weak side of a husband's character, her naturally quick perception of human nature—

“ The harvest of a quiet eye,”

as well as the intimate insight now afforded her, by constant intercourse, into Mr. de Burgh's disposition, made her own this portraiture to be not incorrectly drawn, and to fancy that much of his wife's decline of feeling towards her handsome, captivating husband might have been thus unfavourably influenced by the discovery of these points of character in her cousin Louis.

She could imagine in her own case, that however faithfully, if once beloved, she might have preserved her affection towards such a truly amiable man, that he was not exactly the being who would ever have very strongly impressed or awakened any deep and lasting feeling in her heart—

“That love for which a woman’s heart
Will beat until it breaks.”

Woman, feelingly conscious of her own comparative infirmity of mind and disposition, vague, imperfect in idea and purpose, either for good or evil, naturally inclines towards those of the opposite sex, who carry out to their fullest extent the distinguishing attributes of their nature—masculine stability, and strength of purpose and of action; nay, even to the abuse of this same principle—she is sometimes led more easily to yield her heart to the influence of the firm and well-defined character, under whose most common aspect may be detected a current of fixed purpose, strong, earnest, and

undeviating in its course—even though that course may tend to evil—that character be strong in all, that unblinded reason must condemn—than to men of Mr. de Burgh's *calibre*, whose very weaknesses may “lean to virtue's side.” Thus many a Medora becomes linked to a Conrad—many a Minna to a Cleveland.

With all this, and in spite of that intuitive sympathy which inclines one woman to side with another, in similar cases of right and wrong, Mary was far from suffering any such consideration to tend to the deterioration of her cousin Louis in her eyes. Nay, as far as concerned the state of feeling to which Mr. de Burgh might have arrived regarding his wife, the more she saw of him, the more was she led to image to herself the bitter disappointment—the great provocation which must have gradually converted into the apparently indifferent and inconsiderate husband, that naturally most affectionate and amiable of beings.

“Till fast declining one by one,
The sweetnesss of love were gone,
And eyes forgot the gentle ray
They wore in courtship’s sunny day,
And voices lost the tones that shed
A tenderness round all they said,
And hearts so lately mingled seemed
Like broken clouds, or like the stream
That smiling left the mountain’s brow
As though the waters ne’er could sever,
Yet ere it reach the plain below
Breaks into floods that part for ever.”

Nor could Mary, though Mrs. de Burgh’s extreme kindness to herself made her easily incline to indulgence and partiality, at all times bring herself to approve or enter into her feelings or course of conduct, or be led quite to do, and think as it pleased her beautiful cousin.

One instance of the kind it may be necessary that we should record, both as in it our heroine was more personally concerned, and as forming a more regular link in the chain of our story.

CHAPTER X.

Lo! where the paling cheek, the unconscious sigh,
The slower footstep, and the heavier eye,
Betray the burthen of sweet thoughts and mute,
The slight tree bows beneath the golden fruit.

THE NEW TIMON.

It was a beautiful afternoon, in the first week of August, and the two ladies set off as usual for their afternoon's drive, the little Louisa seated between them. Mr. de Burgh had been on the steps to see the party start, himself lifting the child with his usual tenderness into the carriage — and wishing them a pleasant drive, he casually inquired in what direction they meant to go.

"To Morland, I think," answered Mrs. de Burgh carelessly, as she gathered up the reins, and arranged herself upon her seat.

"To Morland," he repeated.

"Yes! have you any objection?"

"Oh, none whatever!"

"Well, good bye!" and with a light touch of the whip, the pretty ponies were put in motion.

Ere they had proceeded far through the park Mrs. de Burgh said, laughing :

"I told him we were going to Morland, but that is not at all my intention. You need not say anything about it, but I have made up my mind to drive you to Montrevor. Really I ought to go and see old Uncle Trevor after his illness ; at any rate, I must speak to Eugene, and make personal inquiries."

"But why tell Louis that you were going to Morland? Oh, Olivia! do not drive there to-day," Mary exclaimed in some consternation.

"Why not," inquired Mrs. de Burgh, looking at her companion in surprise: "you really do not mean to say that I ought to submit to the absurd objection Louis expressed the other night upon the subject?"

Mary could not say with sincerity, that this—or even the unnecessary deceit which her companion intended to put upon her husband—however this might have offended her conscience, was the chief cause which now rendered the proposed excursion so repugnant to her feelings; there was another, of a nature she could not exactly explain; but which nevertheless influenced them greatly on this occasion.

The fact was, upon poor Mary's heart by this time had been worked an impression far from being of a light or imaginative nature.

The constant visits of the dark-eyed cousin of Mrs. de Burgh, had conjured up feelings as far removed from the dream-like fancy of other days, as is the shadow from the substance, and the very fact of the existence of such feelings

made her painfully susceptible to any proceeding which might, in the slightest degree, even on the part of others, make her appear desirous of courting the society of the object who had awakened them—and of whose corresponding sentiments towards herself, she had as yet no certain guarantee.

Mary could not but suspect that this excursion to Montrevor would be only made by Mrs. de Burgh on her account, and that this might be made to appear to Eugene Trevor by his cousin ; therefore, when Mrs. de Burgh only laughed at her evident disinclination, she, on the impulse of the feelings with which the idea inspired her, begged that at any rate, if her cousin were really bent upon the plan, that she would suffer her to remain behind. Whereupon Mrs. de Burgh, somewhat coldly drawing in the reins, begged Mary would do as she pleased ; if she really had so great an objection to going to Montrevor—perhaps she would not mind return-

ing, as she had a particular wish to go and inquire after her uncle.

Mrs. de Burgh indeed offered to drive her back, but Mary said, she would really like the walk, and accordingly was suffered silently to alight, feeling perhaps a little inclined to doubt, whether she had not gone rather too far in thus decidedly carrying out her own way, yet not liking to give in after she had so strongly expressed her disinclination.

Mrs. de Burgh wished her a pleasant walk, and little Louisa knelt upon the seat and kissed her hand regretfully to her retreating cousin as they went their several ways.

* * * *

Mary walked slowly, and rather dejectedly back towards the house, knowing that her cousin Louis, with whom she would fain have avoided the necessity of giving the reason of her return, had been on the point of setting off towards a distant part of the grounds when they had left him.

Just as she arrived in sight of the mansion, the sound of a horse's feet met her ear, the next moment a horseman riding up a different approach to that by which she came, appeared in sight. It was Eugene Trevor. He immediately perceived her, and dismounting threw his bridle to a servant standing on the step, and hurried forward to meet her.

Mary was so totally unprepared for a *rencontre*, which circumstances rendered at that moment peculiarly embarrassing to her feelings, that she received Trevor with a coldness and constraint unusual to her manner; and when he mentioned the fear he had entertained of finding them out, she merely answered, that Olivia had gone for a drive, but that Louis was in the grounds, and proposed walking on to find him. Eugene did not object, so they proceeded in the requisite direction.

Then he told her that he had come to say good-bye. A friend of his had engaged a moor in Scotland in partnership with himself,

and that he was therefore obliged to set off in a day or two, not much to his gratification—for there were many things which made him regret to leave the neighbourhood just then, and he should be away, he supposed, about a month.

Mary was dismayed to feel how her heart sank low at this communication; she, however, made an effort to rally her spirits; and the subject thus started, she discussed the delights and merits of the grouse-shooting and moorland country, with a careless interest which made her inwardly wonder over her new-found powers of duplicity.

But they fell in with Mr. de Burgh sooner than she had expected, or Eugene, perhaps, had hoped; for in spite of any change which he might have discerned in his companion's manner, his lingering step and earnest attention plainly demonstrated, that the charm he ever seemed to find in her society was not decreased.

Mr. de Burgh was evidently surprised at Mary's re-appearance, but supposing it was a whim of his wife's to put an end to the intended drive, on account of Eugene Trevor's visit, and that she too had returned to the house, he made no further remark upon the subject than his first exclamation, "What come back already?"

On hearing of Eugene Trevor's intended excursion, he entered into conversation with him on the subject. Then he called Eugene's attention to those alterations he was superintending, into which the former entered with all due interest and understanding; and his attention thus engaged, it was not for some time that he was at liberty to turn to Mary, who stood by in the meantime silent and abstracted.

He did not remain much longer; he was obliged to return home to meet a friend, and therefore took leave of Mr. de Burgh and finally of Mary, lingering a little as if he half hoped to have had a companion in his walk back.

towards the house; but finding this was not to be the case, he went off regretfully alone.

Mr. de Burgh asked Mary if she felt inclined to extend her walk to a further part of the estate. She acceded cheerfully to the proposal, for she fancied her cousin's eye had glanced somewhat anxiously upon her countenance as they stood silently together after Eugene's departure. And so they proceeded, making a lengthened circuit which did not bring them back to the house till a later hour than they had supposed, and Mrs. de Burgh had by that time returned.

* * * *

Mary went immediately to her cousin's dressing-room, anxious to do away with any offended feeling her conduct might have excited. She found Mrs. de Burgh quite amicably disposed. She began immediately to rally Mary on the very clever manner in which she had managed her morning's amusement;

she had seen Eugene Trevor, who had told her of the delightful walk they had taken together.

"The fact is," Mrs. de Burgh continued, "I did not go to Montrevor after all. It was too far to go all alone—and returning I met Eugene, and we had a long chat."

"He told you, I suppose," said Mary, "that he was going away."

"Yes, for a month—what shall we do without him in the meantime? By the bye, I told him, Mary, of *your* conduct this afternoon."

"My conduct?" asked Mary in alarm.

"Yes, your insurmountable objection to a drive to Montrevor."

"Oh, Olivia!" in a tone of reproach.

"Yes, I did, indeed; and do you know what he said to this?"

"No, indeed," Mary anxiously replied.

"He laughed quite scornfully and said: 'She shall go there some day,' then spurred his horse and rode off at full speed. Ha! ha!"

" 'He laughs and he rides away.'"

Nay, Mary do not look offended. He did not intend anything *very* insulting I dare say. Go dear, and rest yourself after this long walk Louis has dragged you, and which has made you look so pale."

And thus dismissed, Mary went to her room, but not to take up her usual window-seat. There would be no interest in looking across the park that night. No—nor for a great many nights to come.

Most of that next month passed without much outward change or excitement. Mrs. de Burgh declared that the extreme dulness made Mary look quite listless and ill.

On the first of September, however, there was a shooting party, and a few other gaieties in the neighbourhood, the country houses beginning again to fill.

Mary during this interval of time had received one piece of information, which rejoiced her greatly, if it did not succeed in making her so completely happy as she fancied it would have done a month or two before.

Her brother Arthur wrote word, that he should be in England towards the end of the autumn. He gave no very flourishing account of their property and affairs. He spoke of the necessity for his entering into some profession, and of his wish of following up the study of the law. But all was written in as cheerful a strain as if his communication had been of a contrary nature.

Who but the young can thus look cheerfully into the face of the grim monster poverty, and say "be welcome," feeling now that talents which had otherwise been weighed down beneath the deadening power of affluence, may now be given eagle wings wherewith to mount above to honour and renown? For as the German author writes :

"Riches often weigh more heavily on talents than poverty ; but," he beautifully continues, "Just Providence preserve the old man from want, for hoary years have already bent him low, and he can no longer stand upright with the

youth, and bear the heavy burden on his head. The old man needs rest on the earth, ever while he is upon it, for he can use only the present, and a little bit of the future, and the past does not reflect for him as in a glass the blooming present."

* * * * *

It was not till the middle of September that Eugene Trevor returned. Mary saw him first again at an archery *fête* given in the grounds of Morland, the scene of their former meeting and acquaintance.

But that it would prove a day coloured by the same bright remembrances, appeared at first unlikely.

For some time, Mary feared that the expectations of his being present at all were doomed to disappointment, for he did not make his appearance till very late; and Mary walked about with her cousin Louis (who on this occasion proved a better *chaperon* than on

the former), trying to look more cheerful than she really felt.

An hour before dinner, he was discerned among the gay throng, but as Mr. de Burgh did not direct his course that way, he remained—as Mary was too easily inclined to imagine, coldly aloof—either she thought offended, or discouraged by the recollection of the coldness of manner she had shown towards him on his parting visit, or—(why should she imagine it otherwise?) the new pursuits and scenes of interests in which he had been engaged, had effaced all traces of any slight impression she might have made upon his mind or feelings.

No greeting passed between them until, on their way to the *déjeuner*, Eugene passed her with another lady on his arm, and the one they then exchanged was necessarily slight and hurried, signifying nothing.

His companion was young and beautiful, and Mary, with pardonable curiosity, inquired who she was of the gentleman who escorted her.

She was told it was the young Lady Darlington, lately married, and we will not say that the substance of this communication was not a relief to Mary. They sat at the same side of the table, not very far divided, and Mary's companion must have found her rather an absent neighbour, she so often discovered her attention directed to what was being said by Eugene Trevor, though there was nothing very particular to interest an indifferent listener in his conversation with the young Countess.

Indeed, even to Mary it might have seemed most satisfactorily uninteresting, neither did it appear incapable of speedy exhaustion, for before the close of the repast, the Countess had turned her attention to her other neighbour, a young captain of the Guards, who seemed to have a greater flow of small talk at his disposal, whilst Eugene was joining in general conversation with others of the company, or leaning forward ever and anon, as if carelessly to review the guests beyond.

At length, Mary heard some remarks made upon some figs of peculiar growth, which had appeared upon the table. A few minutes after, a servant, to whom Trevor had been whispering some directions, brought the dish containing them round to a lady, a seat or two below, and said, distinctly enough for Mary to hear :

“ Mr. Trevor sends these, Miss, with his compliments, and hopes you will take one, as they come from Montrevor.”

The lady, not a very attractive person, acceded to the request, most graciously bending forward to smile and bow her acknowledgment of the flattering attention bestowed upon her.

But Eugene Trevor, who had also bent forward, seemed anything but gratified. On the contrary, he looked back in an irritated way at the servant, as if dissatisfied with the manner in which he had performed his behest ; and in a few seconds more he had risen, and was standing himself behind Mary's chair.

"That fool of a man," he said, in a suppressed tone, "evidently would not know a rose from a peony. I told him to take those figs to the young lady with the blue forget-me-nots in her white bonnet, and he took them to your neighbour with the unconscionably large china-asters. You must oblige me by taking one. They come out of my father's hot-house. I had them picked on purpose to send to Silver-ton, as I remembered hearing you say they were your favourite fruit; but Lady Dorington happened to call, and carried them off for this affair of to-day."

Mary turned her head, and lifted up her face towards the speaker. A look met hers from the dark eyes of Eugene Trevor—a look surely possessed of deeper meaning—which must have been intended to plead a greater boon than her acceptance of the fruit of his father's garden. And though the next moment he was gone, and she left with a beating heart to taste the luscious offering—pay, though he was scarcely many

minutes by her side again that afternoon—for dancing quickly succeeded the repast, and Trevor did not dance, while Mary's hand was in great request—yet a feeling of such perfect happiness had suddenly taken possession of her soul, that she was fully contented to feel that, as he stood apart amongst those not joining in the dance, Trevor's eye was constantly following her every movement with earnest, never-diverted attention.

How strange the secret power which sometimes attracts one towards the other, two beings of natures the most opposite!

Perhaps if two individuals had been chosen from amongst that large assembly, by those who knew them best—who on the score of incompatibility were least calculated to blend harmoniously together—it would have been that pure-hearted, single-minded, high-souled girl, whose ideal standard of the good and beautiful was of so refined and elevated a nature, a standard hitherto kept intact by the peculiar

circumstances of her youthful existence—from whose very outward aspect seemed to breathe the undisturbed harmony of her lovely character ;—she and that man, of a corrupted and corrupting world, upon whose brow was set the mark of many a contracting aim, many a darkening thought, a debasing pursuit, upon whose soul lay perhaps as dark a stain of actual crime as any in that company ;—yet it seemed that this mysterious unaccountable power, did from the very first draw their hearts with sympathetic unison one towards another.

Well it showed at least that Trevor's soul was not as yet "all evil," that it could still bow before an image of purity and goodness, such as was enshrined in Mary's breast, and *she*—

"Why did she love him ?—

Curious fool be still—

Is human love the growth of human will ?"

Absorbed in her happy dreams, Mary drove

home that evening with her cousins, too happy, even, to be much disturbed by that generally most fruitful source of disturbance, the bitter words passing between her companions.

They seemed now to have been provoked by some imprudence of Mrs. de Burgh's during that day; her husband's animadversions there-upon exciting the lady's scornful resentment; but its exact nature, Mary had too little observed Mrs. de Burgh during the day, to be able fully to understand.

Mrs. de Burgh, on her part, had been too much occupied with her own pleasure and interests to attend much to Mary and her concerns; but she told her, as they parted for the night, that she expected Eugene the next day to dinner.

Mary also had received information to the same effect, communicated in her ear, as she was being handed to the carriage.

Expectation on this point was, however, doomed to disappointment; the next evening,

about the time that Eugene Trevor generally arrived, when he was to dine and sleep at the house, a horseman was seen approaching across the park, which proved to be a servant from Montrevor, mounted on his master's beautiful chesnut. He was the bearer of a note to Mrs. de Burgh.

Eugene Trevor wrote word that in returning home the preceding night, with a friend, he had received a kick from his companion's horse, and was now a prisoner to his bed. It was to him a most provoking accident, on many accounts, but he supposed he must submit to at least a week's confinement, as the medical man considered it his only chance of a speedy recovery. Mary looked a little pale at dinner after this intelligence, but was otherwise as cheerful, as calmly happy, as she had been since the *fête*.

Mrs. de Burgh afterwards sent over to inquire after her cousin, and once Mr. de Burgh, having occasion to ride into the neigh-

bourhood, called to see Trevor, and brought back word of his progress towards recovery.

The injury proved, however more tedious than it had at first been anticipated. October had set in before he was allowed to walk; but still Mary's spirits did not fail her.

If "love could live upon one smile for years," much more throughout a few weeks of such unavoidable and accidental contingency.

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CHAPTER XI.

I thank thee for that downcast look, and for that blushing
cheek,

I would not have thee raise those eyes, I would not have
thee speak.

Tho' mute, I deem thee eloquent, I ask no other sign,
While thus thy little hand remains confidingly in mine.

HAYNES BAYLEY.

A FRIEND of Mrs. de Burgh's came to stay at Silverton about this time, a lady of a certain age.

She had lately lost her husband.

Though malicious report spoke her to have loved him little during life, she now mourned with considerable effect at his decease; and though there was but the family party—for

which circumstance she had been prepared—staying in the house—this being the first visit she had paid since her bereavement, she had not yet—though several days had elapsed since her arrival—been able to muster sufficient nerve to issue from the luxurious apartments assigned to her.

Mr. de Burgh maliciously expressed himself fearful that the cap was not becoming, hearing that the dainty, but not unsubstantial meals so plentifully partaken of by the fair widow in her retreat, did not well agree with any very wearing sentiment of grief.

But Mrs. de Burgh said it was just like his ill-nature on every subject connected with *her* friends — and *faute de mieux*, rather enjoyed the lounge of Mrs. Trevyllean's room, where she spent a great part of her time.

One evening, about the end of three weeks after Eugene Trevor's accident, having remained talking to Mary some time after they had left the dining-room, Mrs. de Burgh

announced herself obliged to go up stairs to Mrs. Trevyllian, for the rest of the evening, that lady having made her promise so to do, she being in more than usually bad spirits that day.

"I know you do not mind a quiet evening for once," she added, "and I have already seen you cast many a wistful glance at those books on the table, whilst I have been talking nonsense ; so make yourself comfortable and if you find it dull come up to us. Mrs. Trevyllian will not mind you. You will not have Louis' company to-night, for he has ordered candles in the library, and means to adjourn there with his landscape gardener when he leaves the dining room."

Mary was accordingly left in solitary possession of the fair saloon, through which the soft clear lamps and ruddy fire cast so cheerful a radiance, feeling quite capable of appreciating the enjoyment, nay luxury, of occasional solitude of the kind under similar auspices.

She felt quite sure as she glanced around, when Mrs. de Burgh closed the door behind her, that the *tête-à-tête* of Olivia and her friend would not be intruded upon by her to-night, that for the hour or two before bed-time she should be well able to wile away her moments more agreeably; and when in accordance with Mrs. de Burgh's anticipations, she listened to the retreating voices of Louis and his companion, as issuing from the dining-room they proceeded to the library, and shut the door upon them to pore, for the remainder of the evening, over books and plans—for Mr. L—— had to leave early on the following morning—Mary obediently followed Mrs. de Burgh's injunction, "to make herself comfortable," by sinking back on a luxurious *bergère* on one side of the fire place, and returning to the perusal of a work she had commenced that day—whether for the name's-sake we cannot tell—but when my readers learn its title, they will scarcely wonder if she now proceeded

with almost as much absorbing and abstract interest as if in Madeline's own words there had been "no more Eugene's in the world than one"—the strange and mysterious hero of her romantic studies. The book she read was Eugene Aram.

Thus engaged, Mary's attention wholly rivetted by the stirring interest of the story, her taste enchanted by the glowing descriptions; and more than all, her feelings and sympathies affected by the striking sentiments of force and pathos with which its pages abound. She must have become insensible to the existence of common worldly sounds, for that of the door bell at this unusual hour, made no more impression on her senses than any other might have done.

Reclining back in indolent repose, one hand supporting the book, whilst her other fair girlish arm lay in listless abandonment across the arm of the chair, she just heard the door of the apartment open, but never troubled

herself to turn her head to look upon the intruder, concluding that it could be only the servant come to attend to the fire, and not till he had crossed the room and stood close before her, did she raise her eyes to behold Eugene Trevor.

Yes, there he was, standing looking down upon her with a smile on his lips, provoked, first by the extreme absorption in which he had surprised her, and then by the gaze of startled wonder, her upraised countenance expressed. But astonishment soon gave way to other appearances. If Eugene Trevor had ever reason to doubt the true impression made by him on Mary Seaham's heart—by this sudden and unexpected arrival after an interval of absence such as had occurred, and from causes such as had existed — he had now taken good means to ascertain its real nature and extent.

Nothing speaks so truly as to the character and durability of the feelings we have awakened,

than the effect produced by meetings of this sort.

“Le plus aimé n’est pas toujours le meilleur reçu,”

some French poet writes, but *rencontres* of this description admit of no such refined and delicate subterfuges. The truth must out in glance, or tone, or countenance,

“And then if silence does not speak,
Or faltering tongue, or changing cheek—
There’s nothing told.”

And these tell-tale signs were unmistakeably revealed in this unprepared moment upon poor Mary’s countenance, when her lover, for so she had lately dared to deem him, so unexpectedly appeared before her sight after three weeks separation.

She knew him during that time to have been ill, and suffering from a dangerous and painful accident. She saw him paler, thinner, than she had ever yet beheld him. They were alone together at this uncommon time and under

these unexpected circumstances, and her heart beat fast with feelings she had never before experienced.

And there she sat ; the colour fast mounting over cheek and brow, then leaving them very pale. Her eyes half filled with tears, her half parted lips unable to falter forth, but incoherently, the words of welcome, of congratulation, of pleasure at his recovery ; which to any other individual under the same circumstances, nay to himself, but a few weeks ago, would have flowed so calmly and naturally from her kind warm heart.

“ Eugene Aram ” fell unheeded from her hands. To Mary, indeed, at that moment, “ there was but one Eugene in the world.”

Fortunately for her, he in whose presence she now found herself, however culpable he might be in other points of conduct and of character, was not one, in this instance, to take a vain and heartless pleasure in the discovery he thus made.

“To trifle in cold vanity with all
The warm soul’s precious throbs, to whom it is
A triumph that a fond devoted heart
Is breaking for them—who can bear to call
Young flowers into beauty—and then to crush them.”

Nay, still more fortunately for Mary, he was as much in love himself at this time—perhaps, even still more so—different, totally, in kind, as that love might be; and that he was loved, unsuspectingly, undeservedly loved, by one, in his idea, as far above himself in purity and goodness, as an angel is above a being of this fallen earth—loved even with that excellence with which “angels love good men,” filled his soul, at that moment, with emotions of a softer, holier nature, than any which, perhaps, for a long time, it had been his happiness to experience; and a grateful, almost humbled, exultation, if any such feeling was excited by the conviction, lit up with a sudden flash of animation, his keen dark eye. He did not wait for Mary to finish what she had attempted to express on his account. A moment’s earnest

abstracted pause ensued, then moving quickly from his position on the hearth-rug, as if impelled by a sudden irresistible impulse, he drew a chair close to her's, and sitting down by her side, at once began.

Her face was half averted, but he bent down his that she might catch the low, soft, earnest accents, in which he breathed forth expressions of his joy at beholding her again—how that she alone had filled his thoughts during the period of his confinement—how impatiently he had awaited the moment of liberation—and how, though unavoidably prevented from leaving home as he had intended, in time for dinner, he could not bear to delay one night longer after receiving his release, and had therefore set out even at this eleventh hour—finally, he alluded to the unexpected delight of finding her thus alone, the circumstance affording him, as it did, the joyful opportunity of at once expressing in words, what she must long ere this have inwardly discerned, the admiration, the respect, the far deeper, tenderer feelings, with

which she, almost from the first moment he beheld her, had inspired him. He knew he was unworthy to possess so inestimable a treasure, but if any strength or measure of affection could atone for other imperfections, his surely might be sufficient to plead in his behalf, did she not disdain the compensation.

Poor Mary! Her head sank lower, lower, on her heaving bosom, as one by one these thrilling words—these fond assurances—came falling on her ear, or rather sinking into her heart,

“Like the sweet South
That breathes upon a bank of violets
Stealing and giving odour,”

overpowering it with emotions of only too exquisite a nature.

Was not her's a happiness rare and almost unexampled, to find the hero of her maiden meditations thus prove in truth the master and magician of her fate?

Yet even in that moment of joyful agitation, was there no swift under current of thought,

and recollection mingling strangely with her immediate sensations ; bringing with it, a certain confusion of feeling and idea, similar to the one which had broken her slumbers the first night of her arrival at Silverton ?

Alas ! if it was the remembrance of the Welsh hill-side which again suggested itself, if the image of her rejected lover standing by her with that suppressed, yet deep and manly grief and disappointment, expressed upon his noble countenance—might there not have been too a voice to whisper in her ear, “ And what then is there in this man by your side, that he has thus found favour in your eyes ; what superiority and excellence have you fancied in him, that he is thus chosen when the other was rejected ? ”

But no such voice it seems did speak, or if so, it made itself not heard.

The charmed ear is deaf to whom it whispers—the fascinated eye is blind to whom it would suggest such comparison.

Yes, blind ! Blind as the aged patriarch of old. Jacob is blessed : the blessing and the

birthright is taken from the rightful claimant. "I have blessed him, yea, and he shall be blessed."

Mary has not yet spoken, but there is a silence more expressive than words — and expressive, as that which had followed Mr. Temple's declaration and so coldly fallen upon his trembling hopes, was, to Eugene Trevor, the silence which now hung upon her tongue. That blushing face, those tearful eyes, those smiling lips, spoke all that he desired to hear. They emboldened him so far as the pressing one of the soft hands, which now nervously grasped the chair beside him, and though it trembled, it was not withdrawn; and then the first overpowering flood of agitation subdued — Mary, her emotion soothed and composed, had told her love with "virgin pride—" and now sat calmly happy by her lover's side, listening to his earnest conversation on many points connected with that future now before them; yes whatever might have been the nature of his feelings on

the occasion, how intense and delicious were *her* sensations of happiness ; for as it is expressed in the pages of the book to which we have, in the last chapter, had occasion to allude.

“In the pure heart of a young girl loving for the first time, love is far more ecstatic than in man’s more fevered nature. Love then and there, makes the only state of human existence which is at once capable of calmness and transport.”

CHAPTER XII.

She hath flung

Her all upon the venture of her vow,
And in her trust leans meekly, like a flower,
By the still river tempted from its stem
And on its bosom floating.

WILLIS.

MARY did not feel quite equal to face her cousin and his friend in her present state of mind; therefore, on the first movement making itself heard in the direction of the library, she took alarm and escaped up stairs, leaving Trevor, who did not suffer the same shamefacedness, to undergo the encounter alone. Mary first went to her own room, then shortly after, trying to look as if nothing had happened,

proceeded to Mrs. Trevyllian's apartment, to wish her cousin good night. She found the ladies both reclining on their respective sofas, and was cordially welcomed by each, as if by this time they had begun to have had enough of each other's uninterrupted society.

"Do you know that Mr. Trevor is here?" Mary murmured to her cousin, with averted countenance.

"Why, I fancied you had a visitor of some sort," Mrs. de Burgh replied with a smile of arch significance. "Was I not good to leave you undisturbed?" she added at the same time in a whisper, trying to catch a glimpse of Mary's face, whilst Mrs. Trevyllian turned upon it a glance of such scrutinizing curiosity, that Mary finding this an ordeal, unendurable for the present, bade them "good night," and made her escape back to the sheltered sanctity of her solitary chamber, where no intruding gaze could pierce, to meddle with the shrinking, modest joy, which overflowed her heart.

But it seems that Mrs. de Burgh, with all pardonable curiosity, considering she was not quite unprepared for what Eugene Trevor's visit would bring forth, had gone down-stairs after Mary left her, and had a long private conversation with her cousin; for though she did not disturb her again that night, it being very late before the interview came to an end; yet the next morning, just as Mary was endeavouring to clear her senses, and remember whether what had occurred the night before had been a dream or a reality, Olivia made her appearance to embrace and congratulate her on the happy intelligence she had received.

"You cannot imagine, dear Mary," she said, "how pleased I was when Eugene told me. It is just what I have wished all along. I have always been very fond of Eugene; all that he required was a good wife, such as he will find in you; and I feel convinced that he will make you very happy."

Mary smiled, as if she too felt perfectly satisfied on this point.

“Louis,” Mrs. de Burgh continued, “will most likely say that he is not half good enough for you, but I suppose you will not feel much inclined to agree with him there. As far as that goes, I assure you Eugene thinks the same, but that is only as it should be, the more humble men’s ideas of themselves, and the more exalted their views of us, the better ; they are not often disposed to hold such doctrine. Of course you cannot expect that even Eugene, has been, or ever will be, a piece of perfection in character or conduct ; but ah, I see by your face that you think him so now, at any rate, so what signifies the *has been*, or the *may be* ? Well, you are quite right. ‘Sufficient for the day’ is my motto, and, as I said before, I am convinced Eugene will love you as much as ever wife was loved.”

Mary’s beaming eyes spoke indeed her perfect satisfaction, at this summing up of Mrs. de Burgh’s discourse. The rest she heeded not ; it agreed so little with the spirit of her pure and perfect love, and she then inquired whether

“Eugene,” (with a blushing smile, as for the first time she called him by that name,) had made Louis acquainted with the fact of their engagement. She should be very glad if this were the case, as she could not keep it a secret for a moment longer from her kind cousin than was necessary; but Eugene seemed the evening before, rather to wish that she should delay the communication for a day or two.

“Yes,” replied Mrs. de Burgh, “he told me so last night, and still would prefer our being silent on the subject just at present. The fact is, he anticipates some little difficulty in reconciling his father to the idea of his marriage. Uncle Trevor is rather a strange old man. Besides being very fond of his son, he may imagine such an event likely to interfere with the comfort he has in his society at Montrevor, not, of course, that Eugene would allow that to be any obstacle; but only he thinks, I dare say, that it is as well to keep the matter as snug

as possible, till he has prepared the old man's mind a little for the change."

"Oh, of course," Mary said. "It is much better that it should be so. It is only Louis, who I should not like to keep in the dark longer than was really necessary, staying as I am in his house, and he being so near and responsible a relation. Besides, it will be so difficult when Eugene is here, to prevent letting it appear that something peculiar has happened."

Mrs. de Burgh laughed.

"Well! Eugene seemed to think that he would find it rather difficult too, and for that reason imagined it better to go away this morning before breakfast. He gave out last night, what is partly true, that he only came here *en route* to M——, where he has business to transact; he will return home to-night, and begin operations on the old gentleman. In the meantime, as the most likely means to expedite and facilitate matters, Eugene has

set his heart upon a little plan which he commissioned me to lay before you, and also to beseech you, with his most tender love, not to disappoint his wishes on the subject."

Mary's countenance seemed to say that already his request was granted, but she paused for further information.

"He proposes," continued Mrs. de Burgh, "that, perhaps not the next day, but the one following, you and I should drive over to Montrevor to luncheon, and that in this way his father, before he knows of anything being in the wind, should see and know you—and he thinks—as a matter of course, be charmed and delighted, and so half the battle gained at once."

Mary smiled.

"But what will Louis say to this?" she inquired, "he will object now, I suppose, as much as formerly, to our driving to Montrevor."

"*Louis* ! how very good you are Mary, why

you are not half in love if you would allow ought that Louis could say or think, to interfere with anything in which Eugene is concerned now. But to set your mind at ease on this point, Louis happens to leave home this morning and does not return till the next day, so you need not have to tell any stories on the subject, and perhaps, when you see him again, you may be able to divulge all, and he have no more business to quarrel with your drives to Montrevor."

Mary gave a yielding smile, and we are afraid that even if she had entertained any conscientious scruples after the above discourse, they would have melted quite away after the first love-letter she received, under cover to one addressed to Mrs. de Burgh, from Eugene Trevor on the following morning. A little note which she wrote in reply, necessarily settled the point.

Mr. de Burgh took his departure early the next morning, and his fair lady ordered

the pony carriage to come round at noon the same day, for their drive to Montrevor, which was more than twelve miles distant.

"Adieu, happy people, you will have a delightful drive!" sighed Mrs. Trevyllian, who had actually been emboldened by the absence of gentlemen to face the sunshine beneath the cover of her crape veil, and to go out for a stroll upon the lawn.

And a delightful drive it was, at least to Mary. It would have been so, even under less favourable auspices, with the same happy prospects at the end. A visit to her intended, under his father's roof! But even nature seemed to smile upon her hopes. It was a perfect specimen of an October day, with the balmy and refreshing warmth, sometimes characterizing this period of the year; the sky serene and clear, above their heads, whilst the woods and trees which skirted the roads, along which they so swiftly sped, were still in one rich golden glow.

And it was not for Mary, on this happy day, to think, how there wanted but one chill and wintry blast to lay these thousand glories low.

She naturally felt a little nervous when she was informed they were approaching their destination. The trembling happiness of meeting Eugene for the first time since their last eventful interview, made her heart beat fast—and then there was her introduction to his father, the “strange old man,” on whom the impression she should make was to her, for Eugene’s sake, of such great importance.

Mrs. de Burgh, in her conversation, during the drive, touched in great measure on the subject of this relative.

She described him as having for years lived a very reclusive life at Montrevor; and thus to have acquired peculiarities and eccentricities, even beyond those which in a degree were natural to his habits and disposition—one of which, by her account, seemed to be an inclination to the most rigid parsimony, and she pre-

pared Mary to see some signs of this in the character of their entertainment upon the present occasion.

“Of course,” Mrs. de Burgh added, “Eugene does not much interest himself in amending such matters at present, and indeed during his father’s life-time—or perhaps till he married—it was of little consequence to him, and to say the truth, any interference on his part would not have been of much avail, for an old favourite servant has hitherto held sovereign sway over the house. However, it will be all very different some of these days,” she added with a smile, “when a Mrs. Eugene Trevor comes into power.”

CHAPTER XIII.

I know

She prizes not such trifles as these are :

The gifts she looks from me, are pack'd and lock'd

Up in my heart.

WINTER'S TALE.

THEY entered at last upon the domain of Montrevor, a very fine estate, on much the same scale, and not very different in style, to the mansion of Silverton ; a not uncommon similarity which might seem, generally speaking, to run through the estates and great houses of our several English counties, almost as much as their distinctive characteristics are shown forth in the dialect of the common

people, and even—as we fancy—in the style and manners of the superior class of inhabitants.

But there was one important point which imparted a very opposite aspect to the two places, and must have at once *struck the beholder ; whereas the grounds of Silverton, under the influence of Mr. de Burgh's zealous exertions, were undergoing the process of improvement—or at least alteration to a great extent—those of Montrevor, if not quite allowed to run wild, from neglect, showed at least no signs of anything like expensive outlay being wasted on their culture, or arrangement ; whilst on the other hand, the frequent sight of naked stumps, interspersed within the still richly wooded domain, gave rise to the suspicion that the woodman's axe found no inconsiderable measure of employment there.

“ Yes ! ” Mrs. de Burgh observed, in allusion to these appearances ; “ Eugene does all in his power to prevent too great a dilapidation of this kind ; so the greatest delight the old gentleman

can have is a regular destructive storm, after which he walks about—like a certain duke, whose propensities were restrained by an entail—chuckling over the devastations it may have occasioned, and yet I believe he is richer by far than Louis. I only wish," she added, giving a smart lash to the ponies, as they started aside from some fallen timber which lay near the road, "that he would spare his money a little in the same way ; or at any rate, keep it to spend in a more satisfactory manner."

"Is Eugene the eldest son?" Mary quietly enquired, not the least afraid, in her unconscious simplicity of heart, lest the demand might have awakened suspicions that the sight of these fine family possessions had for the first time suggested the important question.

"The eldest son. Oh ! I will tell you all about that presently. See, here is the house, and there is Eugene on the anxious look-out."

And what further thought had Mary as to her lover's primogeniture ?

With glad alacrity, he hastened to meet them when the carriage stopped before the door, and warm and fervent was the meeting and the welcome he gave to his gentle, happy betrothed.

On Mary's part all nervous discomfort seemed to vanish, as handing her from the carriage he drew her trembling arm within his own, and led her up the steps into his father's halls, thanking her all the time, with the most earnest tenderness for having thus acceded to his request.

"My father," he said, turning to Mrs. de Burgh, as before proceeding they paused for a few moments together to converse, "is quite prepared to see you ; and a very charming young lady—" looking with an expressive smile at Mary—"who, I told him, would accompany you ; and I suppose luncheon must be nearly ready, that is to say, if there is anything prepared deserving of that name, and really I have been so busy this morning, and am so unaccustomed to eat in this house, that I never thought of making particular inquiries on the

subject. But I suppose Marryott will give us something."

"Oh, yes, I dare say!" Mrs. de Burgh rejoined laughing; "and I am so hungry that I shall not much care what it is, so, that there only is 'something.' I have prepared, Mary, for finding that there will be some few points of reformation required in the domestic arrangements of Montrevor; but neither of *you*, of course, can do anything so unromantic as to eat just at present. Come along! where is my uncle—in his library?" and she proceeded to lead the way to that apartment.

In the long, low, and rather gloomy-looking library, on a faded crimson leather chair before a bureau, or old-fashioned writing-table, with drawers innumerable, was seated Mr. Trevor, the unconscious father-in-law elect of Mary Seaham. At the opening of the door, which instantaneously followed Mrs. de Burgh's knock, he hastily closed one of the receptacles over which he had seemed to be bending assiduously,

and turning round his head and beholding his visitors, rose to receive them—giving his wasted hand to his niece, and saying in a weak and tremulous voice :

“My dear Olivia, I am very glad to see you.”

“And *I* overjoyed to behold you again, uncle. It is really an age since I have had that pleasure ; but how excessively well you are looking !” Then turning towards Mary, she added : “Allow me to introduce Miss Seaham—Louis’ cousin, you know. I think you must remember her mother.”

The old man looked at Mary and bowed with the utmost old-fashioned courtesy, then begged both ladies to be seated.

“I really have been intending to drive over to see you, dear uncle, ever since your illness in the summer,” continued Mrs. de Burgh, “but one thing or the other has prevented me. Besides Louis always persisted that you would only think me a nuisance, and Eugene,” she added, looking at her cousin, who laughed at

the accusation, "really did not much encourage the contrary idea."

"Eh, Eugene, is that the case?" responded the old gentleman, with an attempt at a jocular smile, which sat ill on his naturally care-worn, anxious countenance. "A nice character they seem to give me, and that young lady," glancing towards Mary, "must look upon me of course as a sad old churl."

Mary with a sweet and earnest smile, denied the truth of any such assumption, and Mr. Trevor looked at her again more attentively, as almost every one who did look upon her countenance with any degree of observation, seldom failed to do a second time; not so much for its beauty as for that "something excellent which wants a name," attracting still more irresistibly. Mr. Trevor might have been also not a little struck by the expression of earnest, almost affectionate interest emanating from the gaze, with which he caught the soft grey eyes of this young stranger fixed upon his face; "and why does she look at me in that

manner, does the girl want to borrow money?" were exactly the words which might have seemed to suit the first sharp suspicious glance with which he marked the circumstance, though diverted irresistibly and almost instantaneously by the silent magic of her ingenuous countenance.

Mary could not help regarding Eugene's father with a considerable degree of interest and attention, but even under indifferent circumstances, she would not have been quite unimpressed. His long silvery hair falling nearly to his shoulders—the sort of loose vest he wore, and little velvet cap covering the baldness of the crown of his head, gave him on the first *coup d'œil* a very venerable and picturesque appearance. But what on survey most attracted Mary's observation was the likeness, her loving quick-eyed perception perceived, or fancied she perceived between the father and son, allowing of course for the changing effects of age and infirmities, the latter perhaps

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in as great, if not in a greater degree in this case, than the former, for Mr. Trevor at this time was only seventy.

To the now bent and shrunken form, it was easy to imagine there had once belonged the manly build and middle height of Eugene. In his voice too, there was as much similarity of tone, as could have been preserved between such an unfeebled, time warped instrument, and the full toned organ of the other. Then there were the same dark, deep-set eyes, though dimmed and sunken ; the same cast of features, though compressed, sharpened, and marked with signs and characters which she could not forbear to hope even age and infirmity might never mature on those of Eugene ; for the impression they imparted was on a closer observation, of a far from agreeable nature.

"Well, Eugene, are we not to have some luncheon? these ladies must be hungry after their long drive," the old gentleman said after he had made civil enquiries as to the length

of time Mary had been in the country, remarked on the weather &c.

"Yes indeed, Sir, Olivia professes herself very hungry indeed," Eugene replied, "I will ring the bell and ask if there is anything to be had."

"Yes, do so pray. Anything to be had," he repeated with a semblance of anxious hospitality, "of course there is something, Olivia is not to be starved (with an uneasy smile), eh, Olivia? But do not expect such feasting as you have at Silverton; we are plain house-keepers here at present, Eugene and I. My appetite is gone — irretrievably gone — can scarcely swallow a morsel, and Eugene is not particular. Bachelor fare suits him—Eh, Eugene?" he added with a facetious chuckle, "is not this the case?"

"Certainly, Sir, *at present*," his son replied with a significant laugh, in which Mrs. de Burgh joined, whilst both stole a glance at Mary, who cast down her eyes and blushed,

though a smile at the same time played upon her lips.

A servant then entered, and in answer to the bell, announced that luncheon was on the table. Mr. Trevor by the manoeuvre of Mrs. de Burgh, was made to offer his arm to Mary, whilst Eugene having smiled expressively upon her as she passed, followed with his cousin.

"What in the world induced you to put us in this dungeon of a room?" he enquired, turning to the butler, who with one other servant composed their attendance, as they entered the vast dining room, the door being thrown open for their reception.

"Yes, the small room would have done perfectly," said his father, glancing somewhat uneasily at the moderate fire burning not very effectually in the cold, bright, spacious grate, "but you and I can dine here Eugene, to-night—and the other fire," looking at the servant as he seated himself at the table, "may be let out."

"Very well, Sir," said the man, as he lifted up the cover of the dish placed before his master at the top of the long table, which might well have accommodated fourteen, a space being thereby occasioned between himself and Mary, and the couple at the bottom, of very formidable extent; and which seemed irresistably to excite Mrs. de Burgh's mirth, while Eugene was half angry, half amused at the stupidity and ridiculous nature of the arrangement.

"What have you there, Eugene?" Mr. Trevor then demanded, as the bottom cover was, at the same moment, removed.

"Potatoes, Sir, hot potatoes, I am glad to say, for we require heat, here, of some kind, excessively. I shall be glad to yield you and Miss Seaham, the benefit of their vicinity, and save you the trouble of that joint. Roland, bring that mutton here," and the small loin being placed before Eugene, he proceeded to help the ladies, (Eugene was always a silent

observer of these little points,) according to his, now not inexperienced, estimate of their several tastes and appetites.

"None for me, Eugene, none for me," Mr. Trevor said, surveying Mary's small supply, not uncomplacently, and helping himself to a potatoe. Never eat meat at this time, you know, and at any time but with a poor relish. Youth, and health, and spirits, make the best sauces. Eh, Miss Seaham?" in answer to Mary's glance of pitying concern.

"The best to be had here, at any rate," laughed the younger Trevor to his companion, as he impatiently pushed away the cruets-stand, from which he had vainly been attempting to extract, for his own use, some remnant of its exhausted contents, "have them replenished immediately I beg," he added, addressing his servant. Olivia, pray renew your acquaintance with your favourite old sherry; it will be many a long day before that is exhausted. Has Miss Seaham any? Ah, yes!" —

with a smile across the table, which cleared away the momentary cloud that had passed over his countenance, and he proceeded to pour himself out a glass, and several others in succession, though his appetite, in other respects, appeared not much better than his father's.

Mrs. de Burgh and Eugene seemed to keep up a brisk and animated conversation, yet it was easy to perceive that they were not inattentive also to the progress of their opposite neighbours, and that Eugene's eye was continually directed towards Mary, with earnest solicitude as to her comfort and entertainment; whilst the complacent smile occasionally exchanged between him and his cousin, demonstrated their sense of the satisfactory progress she seemed to be making in the good graces of her host. For Mr. Trevor appeared in no way uninfected by the peculiar charm Mary had cast around the son. Her quiet, gentle manners, appeared to soothe

him and set his mind at ease, whilst at the same time, the intelligent interest and animation in which she entered into all he said, flattered and pleased him.

"You must send Miss Seaham some more mutton; you helped her to only enough to feed a sparrow, you should make allowance for her long drive," he called out quite reproachfully to his son, as Mary's plate was about to be removed by the servant.

"I shall be happy to send Miss Seaham as much as she can possibly eat," said Eugene demurely, "but," he added, as Mary begged to decline a second supply, "I fancy she will prefer a slice of that cake I see on the side table."

"Cake! is there any cake?" exclaimed the old gentleman, looking round in doubtful search of this reported, and as it would have seemed, unexpected and unusual adjunct to his table.

"Oh, of course," Eugene replied, smiling; "all young ladies like cake, and Marryott

knows that too well not to have supplied Miss Seaham with one to-day."

"But Marryott," said the old man, somewhat sharply, "did not know till this morning that we were to have ladies to luncheon. You did not tell her till this morning. Eh? How, then, could she have had one made in time?"

"Well then, Marryott is a prophetess, for, at any rate, here is a cake, and a capital one too," the son added, with a little quick impatience in his tone, though at the same time losing none of the respectful consideration, ever peculiarly observable in his manner towards his eccentric old father.

"Formerly, they used to make me cakes and all sort of good things to take to school when I was a boy; why, I wonder, are these, as well as many other good things, now denied me?" Eugene continued, laughing.

"Because you do not deserve them, I suppose," playfully rejoined Mrs. de Burgh.

"I suppose so," he answered rather quickly, a flush passing across his brow, whilst a slight

glance was directed towards Mary, as if conscience suggested to his secret soul, one of those whispers which sometimes disturb the proud heart of man in his most careless moments.

“How, then, are you deserving of this good, best thing you are about to appropriate to yourself?”

Perhaps, too, for at the slightest word, “How many thoughts are stirred,” his own careless question might suggest this one reply:

“And where is she, the fond, the faithful, and unselfish administrator to the tastes and pleasures of your boyhood—your thoughtless, selfish, slighting boyhood?—that gentle, excellent being, prized too little on earth, too soon forgotten in death, to whom, alas! you too seldom had recourse but when other resources failed you—who gave and did all unrebukingly, looking for nothing in return—never wearying of doing you good?”

“I think sometimes,” — are the words of gentle Charles Lamb — “could I recall the days that are gone, which amongst them should I choose? Not those ‘merrier days,’ not ‘the

pleasant days of hope,' not those wanderings with a fair-haired maid, which I have so often and so feelingly regretted, but the days of a mother's fondness for her schoolboy. What would I give to call her back for *one* day, on my knees to ask her pardon for all those little asperities of temper, which from time to time have given her gentle spirit pain."

We do not know—we only imagine—we only hope that some such reflections might have suggested themselves to Trevor's mind, for they are those which, however unfrequently indulged—like the droppings on a stone, or as angel's visits, few and far between—cannot leave the heart less hard than the nether millstone—less unredeemable than the forsaken reprobate—quite uninfluenced by their softening power, and the careless words which almost uninterruptedly followed this under current of thought, no way militates against our hopes and wishes on that score—for it is by the careless, outward sign that the deep utterance of the heart is oftenest disguised.

“Olivia,” he continued, as he proceeded to cut the cake, “shall I give you some? No? Ah, I forgot, married ladies, I observe, seldom do eat cake;” and he sent round the plate to Mary, whilst Mr. Trevor, though he still kept his eye curiously fixed on the object of discussion, as if he could not yet quite reconcile to his mind the phenomenon of its production, was not ungratified to hear Mary praise it, and finally consented to taste a piece, in obedience to her recommendation; pronouncing himself perfectly satisfied with its merits, inasmuch—as it certainly was not too rich.

Independently of the natural promptings of her disposition, which would have led Mary under any circumstances, to pay every amiable and respectful attention to one of Mr. Trevor’s age and circumstances, it had been certainly her anxious desire on this peculiar occasion to find favour in the eyes of Eugene’s father, and to this effect—to make herself—as the phrase goes—as agreeable as possible; an endeavour all must know, in which—when the heart has so

dear an interest as in the present case—it requires no great art or effort to engage *con amore*, and Mary's time and attention thus employed upon the father, it was not very often, though we cannot vouch for how often, her thoughts might have turned in that direction, that she suffered her eyes to wander down the long table towards the son, unless especially addressed.

Perhaps she might not feel quite bold enough as yet to brave the observation of her father-in-law elect in this manner, and it was easy to discover that Mr. Trevor's sharp anxious glances, were of no unobservant a character, therefore it certainly happened that when her eyes did venture to turn from his immediate vicinity, they were oftenest raised towards an object, upon which it was to be imagined, she might gaze *ad libitum*, without risk of incurring suspicion or animadversion. It was one of the family portraits, lining the walls of the spacious apartment, and hanging over the fire-place, facing where she sat; not one of the quiet

gentlemen in brown lace adorned suits, and powdered bag wigs, but one whose habiliments pronounced him a warrior of still earlier date ; and by that noble countenance, Mary's eyes might be seen very frequently attracted, so much so, that towards the close of the repast, when the servants had retired, Mrs. de Burgh called out, across the table :

"Mary, Eugene is quite jealous—that is to say," correcting herself, "Eugene is very anxious to know whether you have quite lost your heart to that gallant ancestor of his over the mantel-piece, for it seems to attract your most earnest interest and attention?"

Mary smiled.

"Not quite," she said, "though he is very handsome, I confess ; but what most drew my attention to the picture, is its extreme likeness to a person with whom I am acquainted."

"Indeed !" Eugene exclaimed gaily, "well I cannot say that much mends the matter, does it, Olivia ? A likeness to a person Miss Seaham has seen—a likeness too, she owns so

handsome, attracting so much interest and attention, that we have scarcely had one glance cast upon us all this long time. We must really make some further enquiries about this 'person.' ”

Mary responded to this fond raillery of her lover by an affectionate beaming smile, whilst Mr. Trevor in whose mind his son's words did not appear to awaken any suspicions, began for Mary's edification, to give an account of the name, birth, parentage and exploits of the warrior in question ; which Mrs. de Burgh and Eugene interrupted, in the midst, by rising and moving from the table, and the former proposing that they should take Mary to show her over some parts of the house and gardens.

Whereupon the old gentleman expressed his fears that they would find all the rooms worth seeing, “ shut, and covered up, and cold — very cold ” (though in truth they could not have been much colder than the one in which they now found themselves) “ and the garden very desolate ” — and then he went off to his library.

CHAPTER XIV.

And side by side the lovers sate,

* * * * *

Their talk was of the future ; from the height
Of Hope, they saw the landscape bath'd in light,
And where the golden dimness veil'd the gaze,
Guess'd out the spot, and marked the sites of happy
days.

THE NEW TIMON.

THEN once more was Eugene at Mary's side,
congratulating himself that the separation from
one another—which the stupidity of the servants,
out of practice in anything like civilized enter-
tainments had occasioned them was over.

“Is not that flattering, considering who was
his partner in this isolation, as he calls it?”

replied Mrs. de Burgh. "Stupidity, not at all! poor old Richard wished to do us honour, and he thought he could not do so to greater perfection than by putting us into the largest, coldest room, and at the longest table. Besides it could not have been better arranged, for other reasons. How well you got on with Uncle Trevor, Mary; we see that he is quiet charmed with you already."

"I fear I have had little time or opportunity as yet to win or merit any such unqualified approbation," Mary replied, "though I may hope, that in time,"—looking at Eugene with a smile.

"Oh, I assure you," interposed Mrs. de Burgh, laughing, "that you did a great deal in that short time. First of all you fully proved to my uncle that your appetite was of no formidable dimensions, (I know he holds mine of old in horror) not greatly above that of a sparrow. Then you only took a thimble full of wine; and he obtained full assurance that you

had not been in London for ages—had no great longing to go there at all—had been accustomed, and indeed did, prefer the country ; and therefore he need have no fear—when the truth is broken to him—of Eugene's being dragged off by you to London every season, his money squandered, as he fancies my husband's is. (I wish, indeed, it was so squandered) upon hotel-bills and opera boxes ! Oh, you did it capitally, Mary ! did she not Eugene ?”

“Olivia is too bad, is she not ?” was Eugene's reply, having—during Mrs. de Burgh's speech—been gazing with a fond smile into the expressive countenance of his betrothed, as she listened, half amused—half surprised and shocked, to her cousin's unceremonious ridicule of her uncle's peculiarities before his son.

“She is too bad,” he continued, “and will give you but a poor idea of what you may expect in this house ; when, of course, everything would be set on a very different train on your becoming its inmate.”

And Eugene took the hand of his betrothed within his own with such tender affection, that Mrs. de Burgh began to experience something of the uncomfortable sensation of feeling *her-de trop*, to which *chaperones*, or any third person, under similar circumstances, are apt to be exposed. So she proposed an immediate adjournment, deeming this the best measure to be adopted for promoting a more comfortable position of affairs.

They accordingly proceeded through some of the large apartments, handsome rooms, for the most part, though covered and shut up, and as Mr. Trevor had reported, "cold, very cold." Mrs. de Burgh at least found them so, and Trevor having proposed to show Mary a more pleasant and habitable room, which he thought she would prefer, Mrs. de Burgh applauded the plan, and accompanied them up the staircase, but in the gallery suddenly remembered that she had something particular to say to Marryott, and adding that she would

go and look for her, and return to them in the boudoir, when they might go out to walk, she left the lovers alone together. Trevor accordingly proceeded to lead Mary in the direction of the room thus specified.

There were pictures on the walls of the corridor through which they passed, and one of these Mary would fain have waited more particularly to survey.

It was a large oil painting, representing a group composed of three boys, from about the ages of ten to fourteen. One, apparently the eldest, was mounted on a handsome pony, the reins of which were held by the second, the most striking in appearance of the party, and whose fine animated countenance was turned eagerly aside towards the third and youngest, a dark-haired, dark-eyed little fellow, carrying a cricket-bat in his hand. A large Newfoundland dog completed the picture.

"Yes," Trevor said, in answer to the look of interest and half-uttered enquiry which a

glimpse of the painting drew forth from Mary, "that gentleman with the bat was intended to represent my hopeful self."

But there was something of constraint in the smile which accompanied, and in the tone in which he uttered these words, which instinctively caused Mary to pass on without further demonstration of the wish she felt to pause for its closer inspection.

There might be, for aught she knew, some melancholy associations connected with the brother, she remembered he had lost, perhaps even with the one still living, but concerning whom she had as yet heard so little, and to whom she could not help, from that very cause, attaching the existence of some mystery. But at any rate, she had ascertained that Eugene was not the eldest son.

Their course was destined to meet with one other interruption. They suddenly came upon a remarkable looking woman, tall, and rather handsomely dressed, with remains of consi-

derable beauty, though now apparently past fifty.

Mary at once concluded her to be the Marryott of whom she had heard previous mention, though the ideas she had formed respecting that personage were rather of a more venerable and old fashioned looking person—a housekeeper of the old school, in sweeping serge, high starched cap, and massive bunches of keys at her girdle.

She had, however, a kindly smile, and some few gracious words ready for this—from all she had heard and imagined—old and faithful servant of the family, who drew back with all due deference to let her young master and his fair companion pass.

But Trevor did not testify much more inclination to pause here than he had showed before the picture; he merely said, *en passant*, acknowledging her presence by a hasty glance:

“Oh, Marryott, Mrs. de Burgh has gone to look for you. I want to show Miss Sea-

ham the boudoir; I suppose the door is open?"

The woman answered civilly that it was, though she was sorry to say there was no fire lighted, and they proceeded on their way.

The room which the happy pair finally entered was indeed of a more pleasant, and alluring aspect than any Mary had yet seen. The whole brightness at present pervading the mansion, appeared concentrated within its walls, for all want of fire was supplied by the genial warmth the afternoon sunshine emitted through the pleasant window, near to which Eugene and Mary at once seated themselves, to enjoy under these auspicious circumstances the first *tête-à-tête* interview afforded them since their engagement.

"This is a pretty room, is it not?" Eugene remarked.

"Delightful!" Mary replied, looking around her.

"Yes! and might be made more so,"

Eugene continued. "The furniture is, as you see, quite old-fashioned ; it has been left much in the same state ever since my mother died, nearly nine years ago."

And certainly though that peculiar air pervaded the apartment which bespoke its original occupation by a woman of refinement, there was very little in the furniture or decorations, to show that much expense in the way of modern adornment or improvement had been bestowed upon it, for many years before the period alluded to by Eugene, or those consisting but of the simplest nature ; since, for the only signs of costliness in any of its appurtenances it had evidently been indebted to days long gone by.

But Mary said (as her eye wandered round with no slight increase of interest since Eugene's mention of his mother—upon the time-worn instrument whose notes had probably been so long unawakened, the books within the carved oak shelves, the *escritoire*, and work-box,)

that she rather liked its simple, old-fashioned appearance.

Eugene smiled upon her, but said he thought there would be some few improvements and additions required before the room would be again quite rendered fit for a lady's occupation.

"It was your mother's boudoir, then," observed Mary; "how fond you must be of it." And she seemed to wish to draw him on to give some particulars of that lost parent, whose memory she doubted not he as feelingly cherished as she that of her own. And Eugene did then speak a few words in commendation of the worth and excellence of the deceased Mrs. Trevor; but still, as had ever been peculiarly the case in his intercourse with Mary, he seemed to prefer that she should rather be the speaker. He was never weary of listening to the most trivial communications she chose to make to him, drew her on, to speak of her sisters, her brother;

everything in the least connected with her past or present circumstances; whilst it might have seemed from the little he spoke concerning aught, bearing no reference to the *one event*—his marriage with herself, sooner or later as it might occur, (for of course as yet, no time was definitely specified)—that that subject formed the *nucleus* around which clustered all interest concerning his own affairs, past present or to come.

* * * *

The moments thus engaged, as may be imagined, glided quickly and imperceptibly away, and Mrs. de Burgh's prompt return was neither looked for nor expected, though nearly an hour had elapsed ere there was any sign of interruption. Mary and Eugene were leaning together over the window, which the latter had thrown open a few moments before, for Mary to gain a better view of the park and woods and church tower, which from their present post

were seen to such advantage, and now were tinged by the first brilliant tint of the sun's departing radiance with such glowing hues.

They were leaning thus out of the window together—of course entirely engrossed by the beauties of the scene before them—when a sound within caused them to draw back, and turn their heads, expecting to see Mrs. de Burgh, but in her stead they beheld old Mr. Trevor standing before them. Mary taken by surprise looked a little frightened, but Eugene appeared in no degree disconcerted, however unexpected might be the sight of his father, in a part of the house to which he now rarely found his way; and which circumstance rather gave rise to the supposition that some secret movement of suspicion, that a plot was hatching against him, must have prompted him to so doing on this present occasion.

He merely said in the most natural manner :
“ Oh ! Sir, have you come to look for us ?

We are waiting for Olivia who has gone to speak to Marryott. Miss Seaham is delighted with this room and the view from the window, but she was just suggesting——”

“What—what?” interposed the old man sharply; “what is there to be done now? nothing that would improve the prospect I am sure. I did that by cutting down the trees. No, no young lady,” softening his first quick tone into an attempt at jocoseness, “you come from Silverton, where de Burgh I hear is playing a fine game, doing grand things with the place; but it won’t do for me, I am content with it as it has been, and now is. I leave it to Eugene to make ducks and drakes with his property if he pleases, when I am not here to see it, but,” becoming considerably excited, “I’ll have nothing of the sort going on whilst I’m alive, no—no—not I. Eugene knows that, don’t you Eugene? ha, ha!”

“But my dear Sir, you quite mistook me,”

Eugene soothingly interposed. "Miss Seaham far from suggesting any such expensive improvements as you seem to have taken into your head, was only just now saying," with an arch smile as he glanced at Mary, "how much more she liked this place in its present wild and picturesque disarrangement, than in a state of high and artificial culture. Indeed she is so very simple and unpretending in her taste, that the only thing she could at all suggest, as I was going to tell you to make a place like this, as it is now—quite perfect—would be, plenty of mignonette sown in the beds beneath the windows, as there used to be round her family house in Wales. If there was only this, it seems that all the green-house ruins might go to the dogs for what she cared."

Mary smiled, and of course did not attempt a contradiction of those points in her lover's exculpation which were rather beyond the mark, for the old man's mind was evidently relieved—his alarm abated.

"Mignonette!" he repeated, "well, I don't see any harm in that. Yes, that might be done—easily done; we'll see about it by the spring. It is a sweet and pleasant thing to have in summer time; we used to have it I think when your mother was alive," looking at Eugene, "but it's worn out since—and Eugene and I," again addressing Mary, "are no gardeners. You've seen the gardens I suppose, though there is little to be seen now. No! eh? why I thought you were out all this time—where's Olivia? what's she saying to Marryott? it's getting late and she has a long drive to take—I am sure it must be four by this time."

"Oh, my dear Sir, nothing like it, besides there is no hurry; no hurry whatever. De Burgh's away, so no matter keeping dinner waiting, (not that I believe Olivia has ever many scruples that way,) even if they are late. Oh, here she is, now we can go out and look about us a little."

Mrs. de Burgh showed a little surprise to see her uncle of the party, but she began to tell him she had been talking to Marryott about a housemaid she wanted. She then professed her readiness to go out, though in half an hour they must be setting off home, therefore they might as well take leave of dear uncle Trevor at once, that they might not have to disturb him again.

This they accordingly did when they reached the foot of the stairs, for Mr. Trevor accompanied them thus far, first staying behind to pull down the blinds and carefully to shut the boudoir door.

He shook hands with his niece with some warmth, and with Mary with most marked politeness, and said, when they thanked him for his kind reception, that he should be very happy to see them again when they had any fancy for the drive ; and then walked off towards his library, shutting the door behind him with a noise which was in no slight degree expressive

of relief. The rest of the party then adjourned to the grounds, their half hour's preambulations extending nearly to an hour. Then Mrs. de Burgh, professing herself quite tired out, though she sat some time in the gardener's cottage, (either for her own sake or in consideration of her companions,) they went back towards the house, and found the carriage waiting at the door, into which, Mrs. de Burgh having first had a little private confabulation with Eugene, the two ladies entered.

Many last words were exchanged, as Eugene assisted in the arrangement of the extra wraps round Mary which the evening air rendered requisite ; but they were at length cut short by Mrs. de Burgh's movement of the reins and the consequent springing forward of the ponies, when he stepped back and regretfully waved his hand in adieu.

"Well, Mary, I think we have done very well," Mrs. de Burgh exclaimed, when they had driven on a few hundred yards. "Now

look back and say how you feel when you fancy yourself, in a few months perhaps, established mistress of this fine old place."

Mary turned her head as she was desired, but probably more as an excuse for taking a last look at Eugene, who she could see slowly withdrawing back into the house, than for the reason suggested.

Then indeed she suffered her eye to wander over the wide mansion, but turning back with a half smile—half sigh—she murmured :

"I cannot as yet quite realize that idea, dear Olivia."

"Well, my dear Mary," Mrs. de Burgh gaily replied, "then I hope you may very soon have it in your power to realize the *fact*."

After a day of mental excitement and bodily fatigue such as they had undergone, the ladies did not of course feel equal to keeping up the animated and unbroken conversation of the morning. Mary for the most part of the way, lent back in the carriage in the silent indulgence of the ample source of thought and meditation

afforded her by the events of the day, whilst Mrs. de Burgh drove but weariedly, and after her first animated address, made but languid attempts at reference or remark upon the incidents of the visit.

There was one important communication which she did however make in a careless quiet way, perhaps owing to the same physical exhaustion, but which seemed certainly rather disproportionate to the interest and magnitude of the facts it conveyed.

"Bye the bye," she said, *à-propos* to something to which Mary had alluded concerning Eugene, "I promised to tell you about his brother. His elder brother, you must know—"

"Yes," interrupted Mary, "I thought so from the picture I saw at Montrevor, of Eugene—and, I suppose, his brothers, the youngest of whom, Eugene pointed out to me as himself."

"Yes, exactly—did he mention the others?"

"No, he did not, and I did not like to ask him questions, not knowing the exact state of the case."

“ No, of course, and the fact is, the subject is a very painful one for him to touch upon to those unacquainted with his family history—more particularly to you; but Eugene wishes you to be told all about it. The truth is, that elder brother, the second you saw in the picture, is unfortunately deranged—that is to say, is subject to occasional attacks of insanity, which naturally unfits him for the position he would otherwise have held as his father’s heir; therefore Eugene, ostensibly speaking, holds that place—indeed his father always treats him, and some say has unconditionally constituted him his successor, for I believe the property is mostly unentailed.”

Mary did not make much comment on this revelation, and Mrs. de Burgh doubtless thought that she received the communication as coolly as she had herself imparted it; but Mary was far from being at the moment so entirely unaffected as her cousin might imagine.

There is a natural horror associated with the

idea of a calamity such as had been related, which more or less revolts the human mind even in the most indifferent cases, and no wonder that to hear of its being so closely connected with the being to whom her interests and affections were so closely linked caused an inward shudder and a dark shadow to pass across the full-tided happiness of her heart. But as we have said, she made few comments on the facts imparted, and Mrs. de Burgh therefore added in the same tone :

“Louis will no doubt be too glad to bring this forward as one of the objections he is sure to make against anything he has not himself concerted or previously approved ; but you must not mind him ; he is always full of quirks and fancies. By the bye, when is he to be told ?”

“I hope very soon,” said Mary ; “Eugene is to write to-morrow or the next day, if possible, to tell me how his father receives the intelligence, which he means to break to him by degrees, and at the same time he hopes to

be able to give me leave to inform Louis. I think," she added, smiling, "that at any rate I shall be allowed to do that; for I have told him, and he is very good and thinks perhaps I am right—that it will be far better for him not to come to Silverton again until matters are more definitively settled—I mean until his father's approval and sanction have been obtained."

"How *very* good of him indeed!" laughed Mrs. de Burgh, with a touch of sarcasm in her tone. "What a *very* virtuous being you will make of Eugene, Mary!"

CHAPTER XV.

But should detraction breathe thy name,
The world's reproofs defying ;
I'd love thee, laud thee—trust thee still—
Upon thy truth relying.

HAYNES BAYLEY.

MR. DE BURGH'S return was somewhat opportunely delayed until the day following the one on which he was expected, so that Mary had only for one evening to maintain the, to her, very repugnant and unaccustomed system of concealment and comparative dissimulation, to which she was reduced towards her kind and amiable relative, a course she was ably assisted in by his wife. The following

morning brought a note from Trevor, written overnight, and despatched before breakfast by a servant; the substance of which was of a most satisfactory nature.

He had broken the news to his father, that is to say, had given him to understand that, sooner or later, it was his intention to take unto himself a wife; that Mr. Trevor had been, of course, at first, a little startled and annoyed, and made fidgetty and uneasy by the intelligence; but that it had seemed no little relief to his mind, when informed that it was the nice, pretty, gentle, *moderate* young lady-visitor of the day before, upon whom his son had fixed his choice; a young lady who, though of good family and respectable position, possessed no extravagant tastes or preposterous pretensions; to sum up all, as complete a contrast as he could wish, to his spoilt, expensive and exacting niece, whom, allowing for the ties of relationship existing between them, he had always held in distaste and terror, as one of the most ill-dis-

ciplined of woman, of course according to his own peculiar notions on the subject.

In short, whatever difficulty might really have attended his important revelation to his father, Trevor only brought forward the smooth side of the matter; and he further desired that no time might be lost in imparting the intelligence to Mr. de Burgh also, as then he should only wait her summons to make all speed for Silverton.

"Why did Trevor's man come scampering here so early?" enquired Mr. de Burgh at the close of breakfast.

"He brought a little note for me, replied his wife."

"What about?"

"Oh, a little private business of mine own; are you very curious?" she added, whilst Mary took little Charlie on her knee, to hide her conscious countenance. "Very well, you may be informed perhaps before long."

She uttered all this with more playful and

propitiatory suavity of tone and manner than she often condescended to use towards her husband, having probably in view her forthcoming interview, for she had proposed to Mary that she should first take upon herself to break the intelligence to Mr. de Burgh of *his* cousin's engagement to *her* cousin, Eugene Trevor; an offer to which Mary had willingly acceded.

Accordingly, very shortly after they parted at the breakfast-table, Mrs. de Burgh followed her husband into the library, where he had gone to write his letters.

Mary, as may be supposed, waited with some degree of nervous anxiety for the close of this interview—more perhaps than might have seemed suitable to the occasion, or than she could herself account for. Surely her cousin Louis was of no such very formidable a character. She tried to divert her mind during the interval, by occupying herself with the children, who were playing in the drawing-room, but she soon found the noisy merriment, and exacting attentions of

the little creatures—as we are, even with the sweetest and most engaging, all apt to do, when the mind is in any way agitated or overburdened—an infliction rather than a relief ; so she gladly relinquished them to the nurse, who came to summon them for their walk ; and then as she justly deemed the *éclaircissement* between her cousins had lasted quite as long as was either necessary or desirable, and that it would be less formidable to join them at once than to wait any longer, in suspense, a formal summons, she determined to proceed to the library, and soon had carried this determination into effect.

Opening the door rather timidly, she found Mrs. de Burgh seated with an expression of countenance plainly evincing that even a discussion in which they were neither personally concerned, had not passed off without giving occasion for altercation between the married pair ; but immediately on perceiving Mary, she smoothed her brow, and exclaiming : “ Oh

here she is ! well I will leave you together," smiled encouragement on Mary, and left the room.

Mr. de Burgh, who it seemed had been perambulating the apartment during the latter part of his conversation with his wife, and had paused before the window on Mary's entrance—now turned, and without exactly looking her in the face, held out his hand as he advanced towards her, saying :

"Well, I suppose I ought to congratulate you, Mary."

His countenance too, Mary saw, bore signs of annoyance ; but that his recent quarrel might have effected, and she affectionately placed her hand in his, and looked her thanks for the implied felicitations, coldly and cautiously as they were conveyed.

"You have done a great deal in my absence, I find Mary," he next said, throwing himself upon a chair. She thought he alluded to the proposal of Eugene and her acceptance, so

answered in her truthful manner, and somewhat apologetically.

"Oh, no! not in your absence; that took place a day or two before you left, but Eugene thought it better that I should—"

"Oh yes!" he answered with some repressed impatience, "I have heard all that—I mean to say that you have been taken to Montrevor to see your future possessions; introduced to the old father—in short, everything has been so well managed between Trevor and Olivia, that there only requires the signing and sealing to make the whole thing sure, before you know *yourself* very well what you are about."

"Indeed, Louis?" Mary answered gently, though at the same time surprised—in spite of Mrs. de Burgh's warning as to the objections she was sure to encounter—at the tone and tenor of her cousin's words; and feeling naturally a little hurt and offended, she added "I do not quite understand you. I assure you, I know very well what I am about."

“Do you?” he said, with something of the sneering way of which Mrs. de Burgh so often complained; “I think not—I don’t know indeed how you should—”

“I have promised to marry one whom I love, and whose love for me I feel sure is as deep and truthful as my own,” Mary replied, the colour mounting to her brow, and a tear glistening in her eyes,

“Like a child who never knew but love,
And who words of wrath surprised.”

“Oh, of course! no doubt of all that,” he said, much in the same tone.

“Well! what then, Louis?” she enquired meekly, yet firmly, “why—what cause?”—

“What cause or impediment why these two persons should not be lawfully joined together in holy wedlock?” repeated her cousin, breaking suddenly into a more amiable and lively tone and manner, as if not proof against the gentle manner in which his ungracious strictures were received. “I will tell you why—he is not good

enough for you, Mary, or rather, you are far too good for him."

"Is that all?" Mary's quiet smile might have seemed to express, for she had been previously prepared for this particular objection of her cousin's, by his wife.

"*You* think so, Louis," she replied, "but forgive me if I differ from that opinion."

"Yes, I certainly think so," he coldly retorted, "we read in the bible that 'we are not to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers,'—nay," as Mary attempted to interrupt him, "I do not speak literally—Eugene's religious faith may be, for aught I know, as pure as my own, or yours—but 'what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness, and what companionship has light with darkness—and what concord hath—' "

"Louis, Louis!" Mary interposed, the crimson blood mantling her cheeks and brow, and her gentle eyes flashing fire, "in your exaggerated estimate of my own worthiness you

are unjust, you are injurious towards Eugene, as well as unkind to me. Yes, is it not unkindness to bring forth such slighting insinuations against one whom you know I love, must ever love, and whose wife," she added, lifting up her eyes as if she felt the compact signed and sealed at least in heaven, "I have promised to become."

"Well—well, Mary," Mr. de Burgh soothingly replied; not totally unaffected by this unwonted demonstration of excited spirit in his calm and gentle cousin; "I will not ask you not to love Trevor; that I suppose—indeed, I too plainly see would be crying out to shut the door after the horse was stolen, but I may—I must advise you," he added with an expression of great kindness, "as a cousin, feeling himself under present circumstances almost standing in the place of a brother, to be in no haste to involve yourself irremediably in so important and irreparable a step as marriage, without further knowledge, a clearer insight into the nature of

the man who will have the rule and influence over your whole future destiny. Oh, to see," he continued, with increased excitement, "how people do rush ignorantly and recklessly upon this matter, it might seem that the happiness of a whole lifetime was nothing in comparison to the gratification of a passing fancy, a temporary infatuation."

He paused, but Mary made no reply. Her cousin spoke feelingly, no doubt, he often expressed himself thus warmly after having been provoked more than usual, or put out of humour by some altercation with his wife. She thought it might be but the angry insinuations of the excited moment—for she often hoped, indeed was sure, that beneath this outward show of bitterness and strife, which bad habit had engendered, in the intercourse between man and wife—a fund of real, genuine affection, one towards another, lay deep and dormant in either heart, but especially in that of the husband's. But what availed

all this towards "the mutual society, help, comfort," which, as the marriage service sets forth, "one ought to have had towards the other," whilst the most indispensable requisites to that effect, "to bear and to forbear," were wanting.

"Husbands love your wives, and be not bitter against them. Wives submit yourselves to your husbands as unto the Lord." How came it that the injunctions to which they had both listened at the altar had been so soon, to all appearances, forgotten or disregarded?

So Mary, as we have said, made no reply. She only lowered her long dark lashes, and waited in painful silence the close of her cousin's supposed philippic, one with which she considered she had no individual concern. For what had passing fancy or momentary infatuation to do with her own deep, true, steadfast love?

Mr. de Burgh receiving no interruption, in a calmer tone continued :

"And Trevor, he loves you, as he has given

good proof, (and for this I honour and applaud him,) and thus loving you, is of course everything agreeable, irreproachable in your eyes. But dear Mary, I speak to one whom I am aware is no rash, unreasonable fool; but a right-judging, thoughtful, superior woman. What do you know of his real character and secret qualities? what *can* you know of the previous tenor of his life?"

Mary lifted up her clear truthful eyes to her cousin's face.

"As to the nature of his character, and the tenor of his life," she quickly replied, "that surely I can have scarcely cause to doubt or question. There could not possibly be anything very reproachable in the character and life of one admitted as a constant and familiar guest in your house, Louis. True, he is Olivia's cousin; but then again, how fond she is of that cousin; and though," she added smiling, "you may have testified no such great affection for him, still how kindly, if not cordially, you

have ever seemed to receive and countenance this intimate visitor."

Mr. de Burgh was fairly nonplussed for the moment, by this just, though simple argument. How indeed, could it be supposed that it should enter into the thoughts of his pure minded cousin, cautiously and coldly to observe, watch, or inquire into the life and character of the man to whom not only her heart had so instinctively and spontaneously inclined—but her love for whom not only circumstance and opportunity, but, if not the connivance, to say the least, the tacit approval of those who were at present responsible for her welfare, had seemed in every way to encourage and facilitate; and Mr. de Burgh could not quite comfort his conscience, as he was at first willing to do, by attributing the blame of this, in his opinion, undesirable issue of affairs to the foolish, inconsiderate match-making propensities of his wife. There was no slight misgiving as to culpable, or rather careless negligence on his own part.

For when or how had he, with no such allowance for cousinly feeling or partiality as Mrs. de Burgh—when or how had he, save occasionally by a few slighting, sneering inuendoes, such as not unfrequently defeat their own purpose, by strengthening and promoting in the generous mind of youth the germs of true attachment which previously have been engendered; how had he—save by those careless and ill judged means—ever warned, cautioned, or even given his young relative to understand, ere it was too late, that there was in the favoured cousin of his wife, and his own cheerful tolerated guest, anything either reprehensible in himself, or objectionable in their attachment, or even union? No, absorbed in his own selfish interests, his own pursuits, he had gone his way “to his farm or to his merchandize,” and never given his mind the trouble to think or care whether much might not be doing which it would require more than a few strongly expressed adjurations

and highly coloured representations on his part to undo—which, in short, must cause him practically to prove

“He might as soon go kindle fire with snow

As seek to quench the fire of love with words.”

He probably thought all this during the short silence which succeeded Mary’s last address ; and had at length nothing better to say in reply, and that with some conscious impatience, than—

“Oh, my dear Mary, as to this view of the matter, in the present state of the world, it would be impossible to shut one’s doors or turn one’s back upon many a person, whom we should on the other hand be very sorry to see more closely associated with those for whom we feel interest or affection.”

“But of what, then, do you accuse Eugene?” Mary inquired, still with the quiet confidence of one whose faith and trust are yet unshaken. And Mr. de Burgh was again at fault.

There is a natural code of honour subsisting between men of any generosity of mind, which sensitively withholds them from a direct exposure of those reprehensible points of conduct or of character for which they have not openly and to the face of the offender testified their blame or abhorrence. And to have now coolly set to work, and laid before the eyes of Mary facts or fancies concerning the man with whom he had ever lived on terms of friendly intercourse, and so deprive him, as was at least his desired purpose, of the blessing which, perhaps for some good end, had been assigned him; all this assumed—when thus by Mary's question brought so directly to the point—an aspect somewhat of a dastardly and serpent-like character.

So, rising from his seat and taking a turn across the room, as if by movement to assist himself in this dilemma, Louis de Burgh replied:

“ Accuse ! why that is rather a strong term to use, Mary. I should not like to accuse

any man, or even to prejudice you against Trevor; but still, without particularising any enormities, there must be many things in the life and character of a man, hitherto so entirely given to the world and its pursuits, which must make him in the eyes of many besides myself, not exactly the person worthy to become the husband of my pure and gentle-hearted cousin."

Mary drooped her eyelids sadly and thoughtfully. Perhaps the recollection of Mr. Temple, and all that he had brought forward against this evil world, of which she now heard her lover so decidedly pronounced the votary, passed before her mind; but of the real nature or extent of that evil she could form but so obscure and vague an idea, that in her present state of feeling it only awoke in her heart a more sorrowful interest, to think that it was Eugene's fate to be exposed to its dread and grievous influence.

"Perhaps you think, as women so often flatter themselves," Mr. de Burgh continued, as she

uttered no comment on his words, "that the power of your *love* will suffice to reform all that may be amiss."

"No, no!" interrupted Mary; "believe me, Louis, I have no such presumptuous expectations—no such reliance on my own influence and power, to reform, what a higher strength and higher power alone could effect; but I should indeed have faith and hope—"

"Oh yes, I daresay, and boundless charity to boot!" interposed her cousin with a smile; for he began to perceive, perhaps, that he was making but a bad business of the affair he had taken in hand. "Well, well, Mary; all I can say is, that if Trevor is destined to possess you, he will be more fortunate than many a better man, if I may dare so to express myself before you; for he will, I feel pretty sure, be blessed with one of those loving and amiable, faithful and obedient wives, such as the Church directs us to pray that each woman may become who approaches the altar as a

bride, but which petition, I am sorry to say, we do not in *every case* see fulfilled."

"My dear Louis, I fear you are inclined to be very severe to-day on all (I must thankfully own) except myself; but tell me, if you are not compelled to confess that I also may hope to possess a loving, amiable, and faithful husband (obedient, you know, is not enjoined in his case). You say I do not know enough of Eugene to be convinced of his real qualities; I think you are mistaken in this. It does not surely require a very long acquaintance to discern whether a person is amiable; and I am nearly certain no partial affection would blind me in that respect. I should say Eugene's temper was perfect—oh! of course you laugh at me—I do not quite mean perfect, though even if it were not—"

"Oh no, of course, if he had the temper of the devil—excuse me Mary—I have no doubt you would be content at present; but I do not wish to say anything against Trevor's temper, I would not undertake to do so.

He is a good son to all appearance; what kind of husband he will make remains to be proved."

"That he will ever love me less than he does now, I cannot, could not *try* even to fancy," Mary continued, with a voice tremulous with feeling; "and now, at least you must confess that his affection for me is most true, most purely disinterested; that he loves me for myself alone; or how else would he wish to marry one who possesses neither beauty, talents, or fortune."

"By the bye," rejoined Mr. de Burgh, as if the subject had been but suddenly suggested to his mind by Mary's latter words, "I suppose you are aware to what circumstances Eugene is indebted for the position he now, to all appearance, holds as his father's heir?"

"Yes," Mary responded, rather sadly, "to the mental derangement of his brother."

"Yes, that is the plea," Mr. de Burgh coldly replied.

"But," Mary continued, after a pause, and

without having been struck by any peculiar emphasis her cousin might have placed upon these latter words, "Olivia, I think, told me at the same time, that this misfortune was purely accidental, that at least there was no hereditary evil of the kind existing in the family.

"Oh, none whatever; most perfectly accidental, I believe," was Mr. de Burgh's apparently careless rejoinder, as he stood looking out of the window, as he had done on Mary's entrance. And here the conversation ended, except that Mary, before leaving the room, approached her cousin, saying in an affectionate tone:

"And now, before I go, Louis, you will wish me joy, I am sure."

"Most certainly, dear Mary," he replied, as he fervently wrung her proffered hand, "all possible joy and happiness that heaven and earth can bestow upon you."

"Thank you very much, dear Louis," Mary

replied, "and I may write," she added, more timidly, "and tell him that he may come; I would not let him do so again, till I had informed you of our engagement.

"Oh yes, write of course if you like, most certainly."

And Mary, again thanking him, left the library, and returned to the drawing-room.

CHAPTER XVI.

She watch'd for him at dawn, and she watched for him
at noon,
Tho' well she knew she could not hope to see him come
so soon ;
She could not rest, but peeping thro' her casement's
leafy screen,
She watched the spot where she was told his form would
first be seen.

HAYNES BAYLEY.

MRS. DE BURGH looked with some anxiety,
and Mrs. Trevyllian, who was also present, with
some curiosity, into the face of Mary as she
entered the apartment ; but whatever signs
of recent excitement or agitation might be
discerned thereupon, there was a happy smile

trembling on her lips, which told that all was peace and contentment now, and when Mrs. de Burgh, on contriving to draw her apart, eagerly enquired as to the issue of her interview, Mary answered :

“ Oh, all is right ! Louis is very kind, and he has given me leave to write immediately to Eugene, and bid him come here.” She was sufficiently satisfied to ask no more questions for the present, and Mary went upstairs to write her letter.

When she returned to the drawing-room, Mr. de Burgh had joined the party, and was standing with his back to the fire, looking rather cross, while Mrs. de Burgh was smiling with some evidently suppressed triumph.

“ I suppose,” she said, with careless ease, “ that we may send a servant on horseback with Mary’s letter.”

“ Oh, certainly ! if Mary wishes it ; but I think there is no such particular hurry, and that it might very well wait till to-morrow. The

horses and servants have had, and are likely to have, plenty to do, with all this scampering to and fro, between this and Montrevor."

Mrs. de Burgh remarked that she never knew anything so ill-natured as he was. Mrs. Trevyllian even looked astonished at such a show of ungraciousness on the part of the handsome Mr. de Burgh; but Mary said good humouredly that the post would do quite as well for her letter, and dropped it quietly into the letter-box on her way to luncheon.

It was—as it turned out—"quite as well," for Trevor was engaged at some county meeting that evening—and had been from home, which prevented his going to Silvertown the following day till a short time before dinner.

* * * * *

It was no use now for Mary to take her summer place by the window, and watch for her lover's arrival, for the shades of the October evening had almost closed over the scene before the happy time arrived; but the noise of wheels,

along with the quick, sharp sound of the horse's hoofs gladly saluted her ears, and she was down stairs to meet him ere he had many minutes reached the drawing-room.

They were standing together on the hearth-rug when Mr. de Burgh made his appearance.

He shook hands with Eugene Trevor with the most perfect cordiality, and having first rang the bell for dinner, stood beside him conversing in his usual manner on indifferent subjects, Mary, on his entrance, having retreated a little into the back-ground, to talk to the children; and they were thus all spirits and good humour, when Mrs. de Burgh joined them, accompanied by Mrs. Trevyllian, who had been induced to make one of the dinner-party, in order that she might be introduced to, and have an opportunity of beholding Mr. Trevor; she having been—of course in the strictest confidence—enlightened by Mrs. de Burgh as to the position of affairs between that gentleman and Miss Seaham.

At dinner everything went on *à merveille*, sociably and agreeably in the extreme, and as the two gentlemen left the dining-room, the cheerful laugh which was heard proceeding from Eugene Trevor's lips told that if the *great* subject had been discussed during the *tête-à-tête* to which he and Mr. de Burgh had been subjected, nothing but good humour and friendliness, had been the issue.

Before their arrival, Mrs. de Burgh and Mrs. Trevyllian had been in deep admiration of a very beautiful ring, of which the quick eyes of the former had caught sight during dinner, glittering on Mary's finger, where it had been placed by her lover on their private meeting that evening. How Mary prized this first love-gift we may well imagine !

The rest of the evening proved one of undisturbed serenity and enjoyment. Mrs. de Burgh seated herself at the piano, and sang over her most beautiful and touching songs, whilst her husband made himself very agreeable to Mrs. Trevyllian.

How Eugene and Mary occupied themselves it is not very difficult to explain. Mary at least could have entered into the fancy of Madame de Staël, who depicts her idea of one of the highest felicities that could be imagined as belonging to that seventh heaven of which an angel was sent to explore the delights—to be the listening to sweet music by the side of one beloved.

How, too, this evening must have brought to her remembrance that first night of her arrival at Silverton, when she had listened to those sweet strains with so much more unmingled, unassociated delight; though even then, could she have remembered right, something beyond the mere spirit of the music had faintly stirred her heart in that same hour.

“That hour when first this glance met thine,
Yet trembled lest it told too much,
The hour when first thy hand pressed mine,
Yet pressed as though it feared to touch,
When some strange voice appeared to say,
That each must run the other's lot—
Forget it not!—forget it not!”

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And so, from this day forward everything with reference to that engagement, seemed to run on as smoothly towards its projected end as ever did the course of such "true love." Mr. de Burgh, however he might continue inwardly to disapprove, appeared to think he had done all that duty and conscience entitled him to attempt; and that he had no chance against love and trust, such as had been exhibited by the object on whom he had made his attack. Even with his wife, he forebore any direct discussion on the subject after this period, with the exception perhaps of the following short and pithy colloquy, which some time or other had occurred.

"My dear Louis, I really hope you are beginning to think a little better of this affair."

"Indeed! you are quite mistaken on that point."

"At any rate, you have come to the determination that it is a most foolish, if not most

dangerous and presumptuous act, ever to attempt to mar a match."

"I have come to the determination that there is *one* thing more foolish, dangerous, and presumptuous, namely, to *make* one."

"Oh, if you mean to apply that to me, you are quite at fault. You seem to give me all the credit of this business; I assure you it is more than I can lay claim to. I never saw a match which seemed more truly one of those said to be made in heaven. Why, years ago, at that fête at Morland before we married, I now perfectly remember Eugene telling me after it was over, that he had never met with a sweeter little girl than that Miss Seaham, whom he had good-naturedly taken under his charge, and the first night he met her here, after Mary's arrival, he hardly took his eyes off her all the evening; whilst Mary tells me she had never forgotten him since he was so kind to her at that *fête*. But even if it were not so, I cannot imagine why you

should set your face so much against the marriage."

"Really!" responded the husband, shrugging his shoulders.

"No; any one else would think it a splendid match for Mary."

"I have no doubt of that."

"And, under her circumstances, so peculiarly desirable."

"Oh! certainly—peculiarly so."

"I really think (petulantly) you must be in love with Mary yourself." (A look of ineffable scorn was the sole response.) "That is to say, if you *could* be in love with any one but yourself."

CHAPTER XVII.

The rose that all are praising
Is not the rose for me ;
Too many eyes are gazing
Upon the costly tree.
But there's a rose in yonder glen
That shuns the gaze of other men,
For me its blossom raising—
Oh, that's the rose for me !

HAYNES BAYLEY.

AND Mary—her love and trust had indeed stood full proof against the breath of warning and insinuation, which had passed over their strength and beauty as unavailing as the breeze across the hardy floweret.

There is a beautiful description of one of

Bulwer's heroines, which so exactly corresponds with the characteristics of our Mary's nature, that we hope we may be excused from quoting it here in application to her case.

"There was a remarkable *trustingness*, if I may so speak, in her disposition. Thoughtful and grave as she was by nature, she was yet ever inclined to the more sanguine colourings of life; she never turned to the future with fear. A placid sentiment of hope slept at her heart. She was one, who surrounded herself with a fond and implicit faith to the guidance of all she loved and the chances of life. It was a sweet indolence of the mind which made one of her most beautiful traits of character. There is something so unselfish in tempers reluctant to despond. You see that such persons are not occupied with their own existence—they are not fretting the calm of the present life with the egotisms of care—of conjecture and calculation: if they learn anxiety, it is for another; but in the heart of that other how entire is their trust."

Thus the constant intercourse which from that day forth was maintained between them, served but to strengthen the infatuation, (if we are justified in applying such a term to such genuine affection) of Mary towards her lover.

Scarcely a day passed on which Trevor did not arrive to stay, or at least to spend some hours at Silverton. They walked—and often—for there was Mrs. de Burgh's beautiful horse now at Mary's disposal—they rode out together, attended only by a groom.

One day their discourse happened to fall on the subject of Christian names, and Trevor was telling Mary how hers was, and ever had been (a not uncommon taste amongst gentlemen) his greatest favourite. He had always imagined, that every woman who possessed it must be the epitome of all that was pure, sweet, and gentle; and of course he gave Mary to understand that he saw in her, at length, a perfect embodiment of that idea.

"And you, Eugene, you have certainly a very beautiful name," Mary remarked, after

listening with a blushing smile to this tender flattery ; and she uttered the name now in question, in accents, which must certainly have rendered it even to its owner "a very beautiful name."

"Oh yes !" he replied, laughing, "a most beautifully romantic, and uncommon name ; one ought to be a great hero to possess it."

"It was possessed by a very unfortunate hero," Mary replied.

"Oh ! you mean Eugene Aram."

"Yes ! have you read the book ?"

"Why, no ; I cannot say that exactly ; (with a smile) but I saw that you were reading it on a certain night of delightful memory ; for when you left me in so cowardly a manner to face your formidable cousin alone, he found me standing before the fire, deeply absorbed in your late studies, which I had picked up from the floor, in a jealous way, to see with what romantic gentleman you had been so deeply occupied on my entrance. Fancy my

relief to discover it was an Eugene. Of course it was for the sake of his name alone that he won your affections. I was even in hopes that I might find the lady to have been a Mary, but I saw it was Madeline, which I thought a great mistake."

Mary laughed with the sweet laugh which had become so clear and joyous of late.

"I could not discover whether the Eugene resembled me in any way," he continued; "to me he seemed a dark, mysterious sort of fellow."

"He was, indeed," Mary replied, "but a man of extraordinary genius."

"So you will not flatter me by the comparison."

"Flatter you! I do not think you need be ambitious of the compliment. You know, I suppose, his dreadful end."

"Oh yes, of course, at least, I know the real villain was hanged for the murder of Clarke. Well, that would not do for me, cer-

tainly: I willingly concede the genius, if that were all its fruits."

"No," continued Mary, more seriously, "but there is one person, whom, above all others I have ever known, might in some points have reminded me of Eugene Aram, had I read the book before, (the Eugene Aram as represented in the novel, I mean,) for the real character, it is said, resembled Bulwer's hero in nothing but his intellect and his crime. Not that Mr. Temple," she continued, "could be called a dark and mysterious character, no, for he gave one the idea of being naturally of a disposition clear and open as the day; but there was a mystery and impenetrability about his coming to Wales, and his former history. And then the seclusion and obscurity to which a man of his talents, nobility of demeanour, seemed to have doomed himself; his great charity; his—"

"Stop, stop, in mercy, Mary; do you think I can listen to all this, without bursting with

jealousy? Oh, I have no doubt now, that this noble, excellent, mysterious genius, was a worthy imitation of his likeness, and is guilty of theft, murder, and all other possible atrocities."

Mary smiled at her lover's jesting philippic; but she added with perfect seriousness :

"I do not say that Mr. Temple was any such gigantic genius — rather may he be said to possess a mind which might have arrived at any extent of acquirement, had, in early life, his powers been rightly tested or employed ; and as to any guilt being attached to his life or character, the most suspicious person, who had once looked upon his countenance, could not for a moment have retained such an idea. No, it was easy to read there, the history of one who had been more 'sinned against than sinning.'"

Though Mary said all this with no show of enthusiasm, but in the firm, quiet manner of one who, irrespectively of personal feeling, would give all due justice and honour to some highly revered and superior being ; her companion

seemed not altogether unmoved by her earnestness; for he fixed his eyes attentively on her as she spoke, and although he still assumed a tone of light and playful tenor, there was something of real anxiety, in the manner in which he demanded how it had possibly happened—if indeed it had happened, though he could not bear to imagine the contrary—how it had happened that she was not enchanted into a second Madeline by this most sublime of Eugene Arams?

“Because I suppose,” Mary gravely responded, “I had not the high taste and capability of Madeline, for though I honoured and esteemed Mr. Temple, I did not love him; and when he proposed to me the night before I left Glan Penant, I refused him. I have never told this to any one else—but with you, I suppose,” she added with a tender smile, “I must have no secrets.”


Her smile was returned with a depth of tenfold love and tenderness; but Trevor rode on

more silently, thoughtfully pondering perhaps on the privilege which he found thus so peculiarly to have been procured him, and the why and wherefore such privilege had been awarded to his share.

There was another point in Mary's disposition greatly in Trevor's favour—the extreme humility of feeling she entertained concerning herself, and the consequent exaltation of her lover's prerogatives ; that humility of true love,

“ Which does exalt another o'er itself
With sweet will-worship.”

For beauty especially, of a degree more accordant with her idea of Trevor's due claims and privileges, she would sometimes in his absence breathe a sigh. True he had had all the world before him, with plenty of time and opportunity before he loved her, of choosing from amongst the most fair and beautiful with whom he must have come in contact ; but still when he came to see her placed in contrast with



other women, might he not, though she was sure it would not make him love her less—might he not then be struck and mortified perhaps by her inferiority in that respect. Some such ordeal, however, ere very long it was given her to prove.

A very great beauty of the two or three last London seasons, who happened to be staying in the neighbourhood was amongst the dinner guests assembled one evening at Silverton. She of course, like all wandering stars—who under similar casual and unusual circumstances, shine forth in all their glory, “to be a moment’s ornament”—created no slight degree of sensation amongst the assembled company, especially the gentlemen; and Miss L—— might certainly have stood the test amongst a score of beauties as to all outward perfection which the severest critics could require. The perfection of well moulded features, brilliant colouring, symmetry of form, all had been bestowed upon her by bountiful mother nature; and Miss L—— walked and moved this

night the conscious favourite of that very partial and unequal distributor of her gifts—in short, a very queen and goddess of beauty.

Mary was perhaps the most enthusiastic amongst her dazzled admirers; for she, unlike most of the other guests on this occasion, had not been accustomed to the frequent sight of beauties of every kind and degree, equally in their turn “the Cinthia of the minute,” “the cynosure of neighbouring eyes.” Nor was a shade of envious feeling excited in her breast by all the sensation and attention of which the dazzling beauty was made the object. There was nothing in this which could have stirred the sentiment, even had it been one to which her bosom was more prone. But she had better reason than she had any idea existed, for this unconcern; had she but known how there was more real and abiding influence exercised by the, comparatively speaking, pale, and quiet girl who, without any pretensions to ostentatious retirement, so calmly and gently played

her part in society—the more real and heartfelt influence inspired by the nameless charm which she exercised over all those who approached her ; no need, indeed, of envy on her part !

“ It was not mirth, for mirth she was too still ;
It was not wit, wit leaves the heart more chill ;
But that continuous sweetness, which with ease,
Pleases all round it, from the wish to please.”

No, there was nothing in all this ; but still, at times this night, her dark eyelashes might be seen to droop somewhat sadly and seriously on her cheek, and once when she raised them and turned a nervous admiring gaze upon Miss L—, a gentle sigh was breathed unconsciously from her lips.

That bright beauty, who was not, as may be supposed, without some of those beauty airs in which she felt herself privileged to indulge, yet by no means disdained bestowing a few of her most bewitching smiles, upon the handsome, and as she had heard reported, eldest son of the

wealthiest commoner of the county, and of course it was not in Trevor's nature to refuse to submit himself in some degree to the distinguished favour ; besides, although Trevor and his thoughts were with his own Mary all the evening—and indeed his eyes pretty often too—yet their publicly unacknowledged engagement did not admit of his paying her that particular and undivided attention it was his wont to do on other occasions.

Eugene was therefore, at the moment when Mary gave that sigh, sunning himself complacently, if not a little indolently, in the beams of that radiant beauty's smile and those still more radiant eyes. Mary had no jealous thought upon the subject ; she only sighed and wished that she possessed but one tenth portion of the beauty's conspicuous charms for Eugene's sake—for Eugene's glory !

"She looked down to blush, though she looked up to sigh," for surely she had caught that glance, so full of fond reassurance with which

her lover tried to attract her earnest, anxious gaze:—

“Yes, lift thy eyes, sweet Psyche, what is she
That those soft fringes timidly should fall
Before her, and thy spiritual brow
Be dark, as if her presence were a cloud—
A loftier gift is thine than she can give,
That queen of beauty,
She may give all that is within her own
Bright cestus—and one silent look of thine,
Like stronger magic, will out-charm it all.
Ay, for the soul is better than its frame,
The spirit than the temple—
Marvel not
That love leans sadly on his bending wing,
He hath found out the loveliness of mind
And he is spoilt for beauty.”*

A month since the engagement of Trevor and Mary had passed. Before the expiration of this period, the latter, with her lover's full consent, had written to her sisters in Scotland and in Italy, to confide to them her happy prospects, and from the former she had already

* *Psyche before the Tribunal of Venus*, by N. P. WILLIS.

received in return the most affectionate and fervent congratulations, another drop added to the already well filled cup of Mary's happiness; for before this, there had been times when she could not but feel regretfully the want of that real participating sympathy in her joy, which like as in our sorrow, those bound to us by the ties of close family relationship, can alone fully and adequately impart.

The mind, diverted and absorbed by new interests and attractions, may for a time wander contentedly through other pastures—may find gratification and satisfaction in the new and flattering friendship of other hearts; but when that sorrow comes of which the heart alone can know the bitterness, or that "joy with which the stranger intermedleth not,"—then, like the child, who beguiled by the flowers of the fields to stray far from the parent home, yet when sudden fear assails his breast, or some bright found treasure fills his little heart with rapture, flies back at once to pour forth his grief or his

ecstasy upon his mother's bosom—so then he that was lost is found; the recreant heart or the diverted affections, seldom fail to reassert their power to testify and prove, that those ties which nature's early associations and kindred interests have sanctified and connected, alone in such seasons can suffice to comfort or to satisfy the mind.

Mary often yearned for that true, lively and affectionate sympathy in her present joy which it had been her privilege so tenderly, and cheerfully to impart to each successive sister, when placed under similar circumstances to her own; and she began to think the necessary lack of all this on her own account to be certainly one of the worst consequences which can accrue from being left the last unmarried.

But every thought and feeling of this kind was soon dispelled and changed into those of most unalloyed pleasure and delight.

The long-wished-for and expected news at length arrived. Arthur Seaham wrote to inform

his sister that the next American packet which was to reach England, would number him amongst its passengers, and accepting the kind invitation of Mrs. de Burgh, conveyed to him by Mary, he should immediately upon his disembarkation proceed to Silverton.

A truce now to every sigh, lest sympathy should fail, that no dear familiar face was near, in which to see her joy reflected—no dear familiar voice to repeat the glad echoes of her heart.

In Arthur, her own beloved brother, how fully she should meet all this ! They two had been sworn friends and special companions from their earliest childhood to their later youth. Whatever turn their fortunes took, they were to have shared them together ; one home was to have received them. Where had flown those visions now ? But would he not rejoice in the bright prospects of his favourite sister ?

How he would love Eugene, if only for her sake ! what friends he and Eugene would

become—what constant companions should they all be still ! Besides, until her brother's return to England, no important arrangement could be set on foot with regard to the projected marriage ; therefore her brother's speedy return was on that point alone a subject of congratulation to the parties interested in that event, and to Trevor of course more particularly so.

Now too, Mary would be able to write by the next mail to her sisters in India, and give them that information it had been deemed at such a distance, more satisfactory to defer, until the brother's arrival had placed matters on a more definite and circumstantial footing, and any day from the week succeeding the receipt of that welcome letter, young Seaham might make his appearance.

He would arrive in England perfectly uninformed as to his sister's engagement ; but in the joyful letter he would find awaiting him at the post-office at Liverpool, Mary had

hinted of some news she should have to break to him when they met, which she was sure would cause him satisfaction—nay, delight !

The happy suspense of the interval which ensued may be imagined. Eugene playfully declared himself quite jealous, though he was at the same time very properly sympathetic on the occasion, a little fidgetty and anxious perhaps, as is but natural for those to be who for the first time see the object of their affections anxiously excited by any feeling or expectation irrelevant to themselves ; and he laughingly declared that it was his intention to take the opportunity of her brother's first arrival, to run up to London for a day or two, till the first effervescence of her ecstasy was past, to spare himself the envious feelings its contemplation might excite, whilst at the same time he might prepare his lawyers for the work they soon would have to put in hand.

Mary did not much approve this determination ; she told him her brother's arrival would

be incomplete unless he were near to participate in her joy, and make Arthur's immediate acquaintance; but as Trevor more seriously assured her, that a short absence at that time would be really indispensable, she submitted with resignation.

The happy hour at length arrived—the afternoon of the same day in which the morning paper announced the arrival in port from Canada of the ship ‘Columbia,’ and amongst its passengers the name of Mr. Seaham—Mary, who had taken leave of her lover an hour before, and was in her room recovering from the slight dejection this first parting, even for so short a period, had necessarily occasioned, heard the carriage-wheels swiftly sounding along the park, and a post-chaise, bearing evident marks of travel, soon appeared in sight.

No need to ask her beating heart who that traveller might be. She watched it nearer—nearer—her hands clasped together, almost

trembling with the power of that strong delight which overflowed her breast; but the carriage stopped before the door, and then with almost a cry of gladness, she had disappeared from the room.

What would Trevor have said had he seen her then? What indeed! for perchance he may be amongst the number of those who do not know the force and purity of natural affection; and how, far from detracting from other ties, other affections, it is but the fountain in which these have learnt to flow with a singleness and strength to which those unexercised in such a school can seldom attain. Perhaps he may be one of those to whose ear the name of "brother" bears no glad and holy signification.

CHAPTER XVIII.

. . . . Manhood's earliest youth

Shone from the clear eye with a light like truth.

There play'd that fearless smile with which we meet

The sword that hides the swamp before our feet ;

The bright on-looking to the Future, ere

Our sins reflect their own dark shadows there.

THE NEW TIMON.

We will not intrude on the first sacred moments of the reunion of the brother and sister, but rejoin them in the drawing-room, when that tumultuous period being over, there is something more distinct and connected in their words and conduct for the reasonable and indifferent reader to appreciate.

They are still alone together. Mrs. de

Burgh is driving Mrs. Trevyllian, and Louis out in the grounds; no one, then, is in the house to break upon their glad communion.

And it was well; for theirs was indeed a joy in which the stranger intermeddleth not. Mary, with the glistening drops gladness had called forth still hanging on her lashes like rain in the sunshine of her beaming countenance, sits on a low seat, and gazes up in the face of her tall, handsome brother, as he stands on the hearth-rug, looking down with caressing interest into her own.

She tells him he has grown ten times more handsome—that she had no idea he was so tall. She gazes up into his clear blue eyes, clear, open, truthful, unshrinking eyes, and it must have been to her like one who gazes on the blue, pellucid, open vault of our summer heaven, after having been long accustomed to the dark, uncertain, latent fire of some tropic sky.

But of course Mary, had no such defined

conceptions. She only felt "the sense, the spirit, and the light divine at the same moment in those steadfast eyes," shaded like her own, with the long dark lashes; but which were not so prone, as hers, to sweep thoughtfully and seriously his cheek; the glance might wander too, over that high, white, open brow, as over a pleasant field, which the hand of his Creator had blessed for the expansion and production of all good seeds of intellect, intelligence, and virtue. To look there, was to see that no base, corrupting passion or pursuit had as yet worked their contracting power, that the commerce with the world and its affairs, in which for so young a man he had been so intimately and responsibly involved, had served but to expand and develop the higher, nobler properties of his mind, which else might longer have been kept in abeyance. But it is the expression of that mouth—that smile which more than all bespeaks the pure, the amiable, the genial and pleasant feelings of his nature—attributes which characterize Arthur Seaham's disposition, in a

manner rarely seen exemplified, though we may in our experience have seen precedented.

No wonder Mary always doated on this brother, no wonder she looked on him now with almost an adoring gaze, and marvelled how she had been all this time so happy and satisfied without him, nay — almost wondered for one moment how it could have ever come to pass, that she loved another, better even than himself.

But if her admiration was thus strongly drawn forth by her brother's appearance, Arthur Seaham, on his part, seemed none the less struck by his sister's looks; and brothers, it is well known, are particularly disposed to be critical on the subject of the personal appearance of their sisters.

"But Mary," he suddenly exclaimed, taking his sister gently by the arm and bringing her face in direct confrontation with his own, "let me look a little more closely at you. There you sit, staring me out of countenance, paying me compliments till I do not know where to look, and yet think yourself to escape all

criticism. Now tell me, pray, what has changed you so? Made you grow so beautiful? Surely you are not the little pale Welsh mountain flower, I left behind me two years and a half ago?"

"Oh, my dear brother," Mary answered, as she laughingly and blushing submitted to this inspection, "I assure you I am just the same, just as much a 'bit of white heath,' as you used flatteringly to call me—but—but you know when I was agreeably excited you always told me I was *almost* pretty, and I am *very* agreeably excited at present."

"And have been for the last month or so, I should say," her brother rejoined, assuming the mock air and tone of a judge, as he gravely continued his research; "that is to say, judging from the extent of the influence I see has been exercised upon your face. No, do not tell me, who have been amongst the shrewd, long-headed Yankees, that any true sisterly feelings have given such diamond brightness to your eyes, such radiant beauty to your cheek and brow."

The young man was right. The change he marked was not the influence of the present happy hour; a stronger and less recent power had done the magic work.

Mary had become, within the last few months, what less partial judges than a brother might have rightly owned as "almost beautiful."

"But, Melanie, I little dreamed

What spells the stirring heart may move,
Pygmalion's statue never seemed
More charged with life than she with love.
The pearl-tint of the early dawn
Flush'd into day spring's rosy hue,
The meek moss folded bud of morn,
That opens to the light and dew.
The first and half-seen star of even
Wax'd clear amid the deepening heaven.
Similitudes perchance may be,
But these are changes oftener seen,
And do not image half to me
My sister's change of face and mien;
'Twas written in her very air
That love had passed and entered there."

"Well, well," he continued, as he marked

the conscious effect his latter words had made upon his sister's speaking countenance, "tell me all about it, and what is that very interesting piece of news, you mentioned in your letter, awaiting my arrival?"

"Dear, dear Arthur, I am going to be married."

The young man made a theatrical start backwards, of affected wonder and amazement.

"Going to be married!" he repeated, "and how do you know whether I will give my consent?"

"Oh, you will! I am sure you will, when you know and hear all about it; and when you have seen Eugene."

"Eugene! what a very delightfully romantic name, for my dear little romantic sister; and who is this Eugene?"

"Eugene Trevor; the son of Mr. Trevor of Montrevor, in this county."

"And how long have you been acquainted?"

"Oh, ever since I came here in June. I had

seen him once before, but that was a long time ago."

"Well! I suppose, I ought to be very much pleased."

"Ought! but you are—yes, though you try to look so solemn—you are delighted at your prophecy—your old *bête noir* being thus effectually removed. Namely, that your sisters would be 'old maids.'"

"Ah! yes—for how could I ever have imagined, that so many eligible husbands should be picked up amongst the wilds of poor old Wales? But you—you very sly little thing—when did you ever hear me express a fear or a wish respecting your marriage?"

"Never, Sir, because I really believe you thought me quite a hopeless subject of speculation; that I was cut out irreparably for 'an old maid.'"

"And I wish to know," he continued without attending to this interruption of his sister's, "I wish to know what has become of all the plans

and promises, on which I have been building my hopes and expectations all this time? What has become of my companion, my housekeeper; the pleasant peaceful home we were to share together?"

"Oh, Arthur!" said Mary pleadingly, for though her brother spoke jestingly, she really thought she saw a liquid drop, dim the clearness of his eyes. "Oh, dear Arthur!" and she laid her face tenderly on his shoulder. She could not bear to see what almost brought a reproachful pang to her heart. "Do not say that; my home, I am sure, may still be, as much your home whenever you like to make it so. Eugene says the same—he is quite prepared to love you, as much as I do. Our love, our companionship, need not be at an end; and you, dear boy! you will like Eugene so very much, and be quite reconciled to my marrying, when you see what a husband I shall have."

"Yes, Mary, if I find him worthy in every respect (but mind—I shall be very difficult to

satisfy on that point) then indeed I shall be fully reconciled," straining her to his heart, "for I *am* glad to hear all this dear girl. What I said was only nonsense—of course I am glad—I should be a very selfish fellow were I not rejoiced to hear anything which is so apparently to your happiness and advantage. Besides," resuming his gaiety of tone, "for the next few years, I am going to be so busy amongst old musty papers, and law-books, and folios, that I should make but a sorry companion for any but the benchers of Gray's Inn."

"Then have you really, dear Arthur, made up your mind to study for the law?"

"Yes really—why, do you not approve, or do you doubt my ability?"

"No, Arthur, not your ability to do anything you heartily undertake."

"Then it is my diligence—my perseverance."

"No, nor that either; but my dear boy, I cannot bear that you should have to toil and drudge at such a very irksome profession."

"Oh, nonsense! you idle girl, that is my own affair. I intend to be a second Erskine or Eldon. The former, you know, was not called to the bar till he was eight and twenty, and had no better preparation than I have had—not so much indeed, for I have already dipped considerably into Coke Lyttelton and Blackstone, and long had a leaning that way. Ah! already I feel mounting on eagle's wings into the very 'marble chair.' The fact is, the fortune I shall now have remaining from the general wreck, will enable me to give myself every advantage for the next few years in my legal studies, as will render me, when I launch forth on my circuits, not quite dependant on my briefs, which, for the first year or two may not be so plentiful as, of course, I intend they should be hereafter. About five hundred a year I shall have, after you girl's fortunes are paid off."

"Our fortunes? Oh, Arthur! I am sure neither Jane, Agnes, or myself will receive or

touch our fortunes now. They must be added to yours ; and then I am sure you will be rich enough to work, if you must work, only for your own amusement."

"Thank you, dear Mary, but speak for yourself, and do not be in too great a hurry to do that either, for remember you have another to consult about this cavalier disposal of your property. No, no, my dear girl, money will not be despised under any circumstances, depend upon it. 'All is grist that comes to the mill,' and the larger the mill the more grist only is required. Besides, I am not going to give a portionless sister away, when she may have a snug little six thousand to tack to her *trousseau*."

"Six thousand ! oh, my dear brother, how well you must have managed for us, thus to have saved so much more of our fortunes than of your own."

"Oh no, Mary, I did myself full justice, but my sisters' money was in better funds."

"Well, for Selina and Alice's sake I am very glad"—Mary begun.

"But you, are to be so very affluent, that six thousand pounds is but as a drop in the sea. Trevor, then, is an eldest son, I conclude?" the brother inquired.

"Not exactly, but—oh, here is Louis coming, he will be very glad to see you; he is such a kind, affectionate creature, and has been so very good to me."

Young Seaham was warmly welcomed by his cousin Mr. de Burgh, and none the less so by his wife, when she returned from her drive. There was something particularly graceful and agreeable in the manner of both Mr. and Mrs. de Burgh's reception of the guests and friends they entertained at Silverton; and when it happened, as it did on this occasion, that their good feeling towards the person or persons in question were in perfect unison, (a rare occurrence!) they only vied with each other as to who should show forth most attention and kindness.

Mrs. de Burgh was delighted with Arthur Seaham's lively and engaging manners and appearance; Mr. de Burgh fully appreciated the intelligence and good conduct, with which he had conducted himself throughout the late trying and difficult course of business in which he had been engaged, as well as his present praiseworthy determination to embrace some certain profession—although he was perhaps somewhat surprised at the obtuse and weighty matters of the law, being the one on which he had set his mind—as would be indeed all those who only remembered Arthur Seaham as the rather volatile Eton boy, of lively parts and excellent capacity, but little application, except in those few points touching upon his peculiar tastes or inclinations:—or at Oxford, where he had been for two years and a half, and had quitted it with much the same opinion as has been recorded of a celebrated historical character, “rather with the opinion of a young man of parts and liveliness of wit, than that he had improved it much by industry,” and therefore many were

inclined to entertain the very generally conceived idea, that a man of such calibre could never make a good lawyer.

But to all doubts and objections of this sort, Seaham had ever his favourite example, Lord Chancellor Erskine at hand, to demonstrate how a man who, until his twenty-eighth year, had never looked into a book of law—who then had rather plied his head with Milton and other English authors, than with the Greek and Latin classics—and who brought to bear upon the profession he embraced, no fitter attributes for success than those which were comprised in a lively imagination, quick observation, and a logical mind, had risen triumphantly to the very top of the tree.

Of course the subject of his sister's marriage was the one uppermost in Arthur's mind just at present, and he listened with eager pleasure to all Mrs. de Burgh had to say concerning the match, which she of course made appear arrayed at every point in brightest *couleur de rose*.

Mr. de Burgh, after his few first cautious remarks upon the subject, was as silent with regard to it towards the new comer as he seemed to have made it a rule to be of late to every one; but then, if this at all struck Seaham, he felt that Mrs. de Burgh really enlarged so much upon the topic that there remained little more to be said—that gentlemen are never so interested and diffuse as ladies on these matters, and probably his cousin thought it better to wait and let Trevor speak for himself in person, when in a week from the time of his departure—during which period letters were daily exchanged between the lovers—he returned.

END OF VOL. I.

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MARY SEAHAM.

A NOVEL.

BY MRS. GREY,

AUTHOR OF "THE GAMBLER'S WIFE,"

&c. &c.

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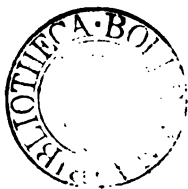
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MARY SEAHAM.

CHAPTER I.

Then close and closer, clinging to his side,
Frank as the child, and tender as the bride,
Words, looks, and tears themselves combine the balm,
Lull the fierce pang, and steal the soul to calm !

THE NEW TIMON.

TREVOR returned. Arthur Seaham entered the house one afternoon, having been out in the grounds with Mr. de Burgh to find Mary and Eugene in the drawing-room together.

The meeting between the intended brothers-in-law was cordial enough to satisfy even Mary's anxious wishes on the occasion, and she was delighted to sit by Eugene's side and hear

the two converse together with the ease and fluency of those who have made up their minds to like, and to be liked by the other. Arthur, standing up before the fire, his clear eyes all the while scanning, with a critical interest he attempted not much to disguise, the countenance and expression of his sister's undeniably handsome intended—a scrutiny which, had Mary's love for Eugene been of a less assured and confiding character, might have made her a little nervous for the result, for she knew well her brother Arthur's glance to be a very Ithuriel spear in the way of discernment and discrimination; that although so young and guileless of heart, when compared with many of his age, he was clearer and wiser of head than many of more years and greater worldly experience, and that no outward gloss, no specious disguise could blind or beguile him to bestow admiration or approval where it was not deserved.

As it was, since he had prepared her for his being very critically disposed, she was obliged to rest satisfied, when, the first time they were

alone together after this opening interview, Arthur pronounced his decided satisfaction as to the good looks of his intended brother-in-law, but to her more anxious question, of "And you really like him?" he replied; "And I am sure I shall really like him very much when he has proved himself as thoroughly good a husband as I can desire for my dear Mary."

She laughed, and told him he was very cautious, but she must make allowances, poor fellow! for she still believed him to be a little bit jealous; an imputation well founded or not, as it might be, Arthur did not attempt to contradict; and perhaps—particularly as time went on, and day after day he saw more plainly in how strong a manner was his sister's heart enthralled by this her new affection—how hopelessly the stream of former interests, former feeling had turned into this new-formed channel. How, though he had found her sisterly love still unimpaired, it could now form but a tributary stream to the full abounding river which had arisen to engulf her heart; nay, more, experiencing how He, the once chief object of her

affection, had become as nothing in comparison with the exalted place he had before held in her regard, how in her lover's presence he must feel himself as nothing, or even *de trop*—and in his absence but the temporary substitute, ill able to divert the yearning sigh, the longing look, the anxious thought for the beloved one's return.

No wonder if the young man did experience, as many are compelled to suffer under similar circumstances, a sensation slightly analogous to the one of which his sister had playfully accused him—and therefore was compelled to be still more watchful over himself, lest such sentiment might in any degree interfere with the just and unprejudiced estimate he desired to take of Eugene Trevor's merits.

"'Tis difficult to see another,
A passing stranger of a day,
Who never hath been friend or brother,
Pluck with a look her heart away;
'Tis difficult at once to crush
The rebel murmur in the breast,
To press the heart to earth, and hush
Its bitter jealousy to rest,
And difficult—the eye gets dim,
The lip wants power to smile on *Him*."

But on one point Arthur Seaham soon became fully satisfied, and much did it tend to overcome any invidious promptings of the heart against his future brother ; for the young man's love towards his sister was in the main most essentially unselfish. Day by day showed him only more surely, not only how she loved Eugene—but the ardour and devotion with which she was also beloved by him.

It was impossible to be daily and hourly the witness of their intercourse—to watch the anxiety with which he regarded her every motion ; the earnest attention with which he hung upon her every word—the adoring affection with which he gazed upon her sweet expressive countenance, and not be assured that his love was, for the present at least, deep, earnest and sincere ?

And was not this enough to disarm the brother of all present criticism, and divert the more close and jealous inquiry which must come hereafter. To continue in the words of that favourite poet, from which we find ourselves so often quoting, as coming so naturally and

gracefully to our aid in description of the present case.

"I never spoke of wealth or race
To one who asked so much from me ;
I looked but in my sister's face,
And mused if she would happier be ;
And I began to watch his mood,
And feel with him love's trembling care,
And bade God bless him as he wooed
That loving girl so fond and fair."

* * * * *

And Trevor—he was able with perfect sincerity and unreserve to satisfy Mary's mind as to his unfeigned admiration and approval of her darling brother. There was no jealousy to interfere here, on his part.

Jealousy? Ah! the most prone to such infirmity, could with difficulty have conjured up the shadow of an excuse for similar weakness in his case. Had he not won over—secured to himself as much, quite as much exclusive love as he could either desire or deserve? Besides, we have by this time perceived that Trevor was by no means a man

unable to appreciate the good and beautiful in mind and character ; and how much of these were to be found in his young brother-in-law elect ! He entered with the most kindly interest into his plans and prospects for the future, and often as he watched Arthur Seaham's countenance — as to all professing any interest in the matter, he with open-hearted animation discoursed, or laid before them his views or intentions connected with his future career—the half regretful, half admiring gaze with which Eugene Trevor regarded the young man, might have seemed to express the question to be rising in his mind, as to when he could remember to have been so young, so pure, so fresh, so open, happy-hearted.

When indeed ?

Perhaps never, Eugene Trevor ; for there are minds, in which—like the fruits and flowers of foreign climes, matured by the sunshine of an hour—passions, tastes, principles, incompatible with youth and purity and openness of heart, have either, by nature or the foreign sun of circumstances, struck their roots and flourished in

the very morning of their possessors' lives, and thus, their very youth has been like age.

Once Arthur Seaham rode over to Montrevor with Eugene Trevor. He came back in high spirits, pleased with the place, and amused with the expedition altogether.

"You will have a fine old home, Mary," he said, "some of these days, for Trevor tells me everything will be altered, whenever the house is his, and that during his father's lifetime, he does not suppose you and he will be a great deal there, but live in London, and other places, which perhaps is as well, considering it might be rather a gloomy home for a permanence if matters continued as they now are ; what with the dear old close father, and that fine-lady housekeeper, from whom I received a very cynical glance, as I stumbled upon her in the passage, and who holds, it seems, such a tight hand over her master and his establishment. But I don't object to the old gentleman himself, either. No ! he is a rare old Solomon, and was very civil and flattering to me, with reference to his approval of his son's choice of such a

modest, discreet, well-behaved young lady, for my sister. He even was so kind as to make amends for a very indifferent luncheon—(Trevor was obliged to give me on the sly) by presenting me at parting with an excellent piece of advice. His son had begun enlightening him as to my intention of entering upon the profession of the law, for the purpose of making money, which I saw at once raised me immeasurably in his estimation, and leading me aside when we were about to start, with so mysterious and important an expression, that I began to imagine that the jolly old fellow was going to present me with five hundred pounds on the spot, he whispered anxiously in my ears, as if my very life depended on what he was about to say :

“ ‘That’s right, young Sir, that’s right—make money—make it as long and as much as you can. Make money—make money—and then,’ with a very expressive and emphatic pause, ‘and then—keep it.’ ”

Mary could not help laughing at her brother’s ludicrous description, though she told him he

was an impertinent boy, thus to deride the foibles of her venerable father-in-law. As to anything in his character—or even aught with reference to Marryott, as at all affecting her happiness at Montrevor—seemed to cast no shade of anxiety over her mind. On this point she was as uncareful and unforeseeing as became those traits in her general character we have before remarked.

“By the bye,” exclaimed her brother, either *à-propos* to reflections to which his late visits at Montrevor had given rise, or with reference to hints Mr. de Burgh had once or twice let fall upon the subject, “by the bye, I want to ask you what has become of Trevor’s unfortunate brother?”

Mary was unable to give the required information.

“The fact is,” she said, “the idea is one so very painful, even to me, that I never bring a subject forward which must undoubtedly be one doubly distasteful and distressing to Eugene. He never broaches it himself—I will, however, ask him the question whenever I may have the opportunity. It might be a comfort to him if

I once broke the ice and conversed with him sometimes on the subject."

It was therefore in consequence of this kindly intentioned resolve, that one day when walking alone with Eugene through the park home from church, he—talking in a more confidential tone than was his usual wont, on matters connected with his family affairs, and affecting their future prospects—she placed her hand on his, and with the gentlest, tenderest sympathy in her tone and manner, murmured, "And where, Eugene, is your poor brother?" But she repented ere the words had passed her lips; for Eugene perceptibly started, and paused abruptly for a single moment, turning a wild, quick glance upon her, whilst though he answered but by the single word "Abroad!" it was enough to show that his voice was thick and husky as he thus replied. In a moment, however, he seemed to recover himself from the very great shock her abrupt, and as she feared, ill-judged question had occasioned him, and passing his hand across his brow, quickly pursued his way.

Grieved at what she had done, Mary walked on in silence; till Eugene, as if he feared she must have been impressed by the signs of emotion into which he had been surprised, suddenly began to laugh, although the laugh had in it a tone constrained and unnatural.

"I fear, Mary, I frightened you just now," he said, "but the fact is, you rather frightened *me* by your sudden question. It sounded almost as solemn and startling as the same inquiry must have done to Cain after—after you know what wicked deed."

"Indeed, dear Eugene?" Mary answered with concern, yet inwardly surprised at the careless tone and manner her lover had now assumed with reference to that distressing subject.

"I am sorry, very sorry, I pained you by my abruptness, but the sad subject was so much in my thoughts at the moment, and I had so long wished to ask you something about your poor brother, that—"

"Oh yes—of course—certainly, my dearest Mary, I quite understand, and shall be very

glad to give you some information concerning the poor fellow. Just at the first start you must suppose it rather painful to bring myself to think or speak upon, as you justly observe, so very sad a subject. My poor brother is, as I said before, abroad, travelling I believe — of course under guardianship. He was,” and his voice faltered as if from strong emotion, “he was in confinement for a very short time, but that, thank God! was found unnecessary; and now, as I told you, he is abroad. I cannot say exactly where just now.”

And having hurriedly uttered these particulars, the delivery of which seemed to cost him much, he passed his handkerchief over his brow, on which, even in this clear fresh November atmosphere, there had been wrung forth some burning drops—and hastened on his pale and pitying companion, who gently pressed his arm in silent token of her love and sympathy.

“Mary,” he murmured in a low agitated tone, fervently returning that mute acknowledgment, “Mary, you will never forsake me?”

"Forsake you, Eugene! why should I forsake you?"

"Not even if they told you I was unworthy of you—if they tried to separate us by lies and false inventions?"

"Dear—dear, Eugene, what can make you talk thus?—forsake you! never: even if they were so wicked. Why even if you were really what they represented—"

"What—what? you would not forsake me *then*?"

"Cain's wife forsook not her husband, and yet his crime was greater than anything you could ever have committed," she answered in a gentle, cheerful voice.

"True—true—true," hurriedly he replied, (but why had he been fool enough to put Cain into her head?)—"True, dear Mary, you are an angel, but then Cain's faithful friend was his wife. I meant, if *before* we were married, they tried to separate us by such measures,—or if for instance," he added quite cheerfully and naturally, "if, as you quite seem to think possible, I I am sorry to perceive, I did turn out a villain."

"Then," Mary answered firmly and gravely, "the course of conduct I must pursue would be a question of right and wrong; it is difficult for me indeed, to realize to myself such a position of affairs; but I know—I feel," with a self-accusing sigh, "what my heart would at present dictate—that I could never of my own accord forsake you, Eugene—never could cancel the engagement which binds us to each other—unless indeed," she added, "you, Eugene, should desire it."

"*I desire it!*" he repeated with a laugh of tender scorn, "what in the world could now arise to render our separation, for a day even, desirable in my eyes? No, the time will soon be here when, you know, Mary, what you have promised—that we shall never again be obliged to part."

Strange—strange world of contradiction; strange indeed, that in so very brief a space of time the same enthusiastic speaker should be the first—

But we must not anticipate.

CHAPTER II.

The nuptial day was fix'd, the plighting kiss
Glowed on my lips ; that moment the abyss,
Which hid by moss-grown time yet yawned as wide
Beneath my feet, divorced me from her side.
A letter came—

THE NEW TIMON.

“THERE is a tide in the affairs of man,”
and Mary’s we have seen, from the time of
her first arrival at Silverton, has seemed to
run on to the full, with a most uninterrupted
flow of smooth prosperity most alarming.

It was quite the latter end of November
that the first break in the party assembled
at Silverton was occasioned by the departure
of Arthur Seaham for Scotland, where he went
for the purpose both of seeing his sister Alice,

and arranging several matters of business, and at the same time to consult his brother-in-law, Mr. Gillespie, whose opinion and legal experience he held in high estimation, concerning the measures to be adopted with reference to his intended professional studies.

By Christmas, however, Arthur would be in London, and there again meet Mary, who in less than ten days from his departure was to accompany the de Burgh's to town, Trevor also proceeding thither.

Mrs. de Burgh had persuaded her husband that it was quite indispensable for her well-doing that her confinement—expected in January—should occur under the auspices of a celebrated London practitioner, and Mr. de Burgh, very persuadable on this anxious point, had taken a house for the occasion.

“And then of course,” Mrs. de Burgh resumed complacently, “we shall remain for the season. I shall then be able to look out for a nursery governess for the children, and be in town for your wedding, dear Mary, all quite comfortably.”

Mary, nevertheless, was not to continue the guest of her cousins in Brook Street, though they expressed their willingness to accommodate her therein ; she preferred, all things considered, to avail herself of the invitation of her former guardians, the uncle and aunt Majoribanks, to visit them in their roomy mansion in Portman Square.

Trevor was anxious that his marriage should take place, if possible, very early in the spring, and the preliminaries necessary to that event were to be set on foot immediately after the assemblage of the aforesaid parties in town ; whilst to thicken the plot, and to render the aspect of coming events still more *couleur de rose* in the eyes of the happy *fiancée*, the morning before Arthur's arrival, Mary received a letter from her sister Agnes, announcing—along with many delighted and affectionate congratulations from the late bride on the event, which was to render her dear Mary, she hoped, as happy as herself in her new estate—the joyful news of her intended return to England in time to take upon herself the

management and superintendence of her sister's wedding; for kind Sir Hugh insisted that it should be his part to give the wedding breakfast, at the best house he could take for the occasion; whilst at the same time, it seems the worthy baronet and his young wife had gone so far as to decide that the intended couple could do no better than repair to the baronet's seat in Wales after the happy event for, their honeymoon, Glan Pennant being now let to strangers.

* * * *

Poor Mary! she had been taking a long and delightful ride with her lover the day after Arthur left Silverton. There had been no shadow, no cloud, cast upon the calm, confiding transport of her heart, as they discussed together their happy prospects—the episode of that Sunday walk had never been in the slightest degree renewed, nay, seemed as if by either party quite forgotten.

Trevor was more gay, more gentle, more tender this day than she had ever seen him; and when he lifted her from her horse at the

door at Silverton, and as he did so, caught the faintest sound of a gentle, breeze-like sigh heaved from her bosom, he, with an anxious solicitude which made Mary smile, looked into her face, and asked quite fearfully, "why she so sighed?"

"I do not know, indeed, dear Eugene," was the reply, "unless it be that I am *too happy*."

* * * *

The following morning, Mary and the de Burghs were assembled at the breakfast-table, the children present as usual, but Eugene had not yet made his appearance; his letters, or rather his letter, for there was but one this day, lay as usual by his plate on the table.

"Louey, put that letter down; have I not told you a hundred times, not to pull about other people's things?" called out Mr. de Burgh to his young daughter, whose meddling little fingers seemed irresistibly attracted by the red seal upon this unopened document, as well as by the endeavour to test her literary powers by deciphering the printed letters composing the post mark.

"Louey, pray do as you are told, and do not

make your papa so cross and fidgetty," her mother rejoined.

"Just like the rest of her sex," remarked Mr. de Burgh, sarcastically, "always fond of prying and peeping. I have little doubt, but that if I were not here, the seal and direction would be carefully inspected by more than one pair of ladies' eyes—eh, Mary?"

Mary with playful indignation denied the insinuation, whilst Mrs. de Burgh was exclaiming contemptuously, that he always had such bad, absurd ideas, when the discussion was terminated by the entrance of the unconscious object of the conversation, who after having finished his morning greeting, proceeded to seat himself at the table, and seeing his letter, took it up, glanced at the direction and broke the seal, while Louey, who after her last received reproof, had slid round to Mary's chair, convicted and ashamed; with her large dark eyes watched this proceeding on Eugene's part with the most attentive interest.

The first cover was thrown aside—another sealed letter was enclosed—at that direction he

also looked, and even the child, had she watched his countenance instead of his fingers, might have been struck by its immediate change ; the deep flush succeeded by the deadly pallor which overspread his face. He gave a quick uneasy glance around, but no one was observing him, and then again fixing his eyes anxiously upon the address, was about to turn and break the seal, when his elbow was touched, and the little girl who had glided round to possess herself of her former object of ambition—the seal on the discarded envelope—now whispered in his ear :

“Don’t break that beautiful seal—give it to me.”

Trevor started, and looked at first as much confused and disconcerted, as if he had been required by the young lady to yield the letter itself for public inspection ; but recovering himself in a moment, he, as if mechanically, obeyed the child’s injunction, tearing off the impression ; and thus recovering her prize, together with another polite request, from her father, not to be such a tiresome bore, she returned with it to

her former refuge, laying it before Mary for her particular inspection, who glancing carelessly towards the impression, perceived it to be the Trevor coat-of-arms, together with the initials "E. T."

Eugene in the meantime having hastily glanced his eye over the writing inside, thrust the letter into his pocket, and proceeded to make a hasty but indifferent breakfast.

He did not join the ladies as ~~usual~~ ~~during~~ the ~~few first hours of that~~ morning—but Mr. de Burgh informed them in answer to their inquiry, when he came once into the drawing-room, that "Trevor was sitting in the library, deep in meditation over the 'Times.'" At last he made his appearance for a short time, and sat down by Mary's side, but in so very abstracted and absent a mood, that she began to be possessed with secret misgivings that something had occurred to annoy him, though she kept this feeling to herself.

Mrs. de Burgh's quick perception also discovered that something was indeed amiss, and she playfully told Eugene that he was very

stupid, and must take another ride with Mary after luncheon to brisk him up.

But looking down on the ground, in the same altered moody manner which characterized his present demeanour, he murmured that he was afraid he should be obliged to leave Silver-ton early in the afternoon.

Mrs. de Burgh, on hearing this, and struck still more by his peculiar manner, glanced inquiringly at her cousin, and was preparing to rise in order to leave him alone with Mary, when Eugene suddenly got up from his chair, and, making some excuse for absenting himself, quitted the apartment.

Mary made no remark on this demeanour of her lover, but silently and quietly pursued her occupation. It was not in her nature, as we before remarked, to fret or torment herself, or others, by easily excited fears, or fanciful mis-givings. She was fearful, indeed, that Eugene was suffering under some temporary anxiety or annoyance, occasioned, perhaps, by the letter he had received that morning ; but nothing more serious entered her imagination.

Eugene did not come in to luncheon, but of that meal he seldom partook, and when once, through the open door, Mary caught sight of him standing darkly in an adjoining room, his eyes fixed earnestly upon her, she smiled her own sweet, affectionate, confiding smile, which he returned with a kind of subdued, melancholy tenderness. She found herself at length in the drawing-room alone, and heard Eugene's step slowly approaching. He half opened the door, and seeing that no one was with her, entered the apartment. She held out her hand as he drew near, and seizing it, he pressed it passionately to his lips.

"Mary," he murmured, in a low, thrilling tone, whilst he gazed long and earnestly into her face, till her soft eyes shrank, like flowers at noon, beneath the dark, wild gleam which shone upon them. "My dear, good, best-beloved Mary," then his arm encircled her waist, he pressed her trembling form against his heart, imprinted a burning kiss upon her lips, and ere Mary had recovered from the first strong surprise with which this sudden ardour

in her lover's conduct naturally inspired her, he had left the room, and Mrs. de Burgh entering soon after to ask her to drive, she heard that Eugene was gone !

CHAPTER III.

Still must fate, stern, cold, reproving,
Link but to divide the heart—
Must it teach the young and loving
First to prize and then to part.

L. E. L.

THE second day after Eugene Trevor's departure, Mary received a letter from him, short, hurried, though affectionate, and mentioning that some troublesome and rather annoying business obliged him to leave Montrevor. He did not say for how long, or where he was going, but Mary sent her letter, in answer, directed to Montrevor.

She did not hear from him again.

There wanted but two days to the one fixed

for the journey to London. The preparations necessarily preceding the removal, as well as her naturally patient and tranquil disposition, had hitherto prevented Mary from dwelling too uneasily on her lover's silence. After all, it had only been for a few days, and she knew him to be naturally no great letter-writer. The tiresome business which had taken him from home probably engaged much of his time and attention, and he was anxious to have it over before they met again.

But when, on coming down to breakfast the morning of the above-mentioned day, her anxious glance for the wished for letter was again disappointed, she could not forbear giving vent to the anxious exclamation, "No letter again from Eugene!"

She glanced as she spoke towards her cousin Louis, and perceived his regard fixed upon her, with so anxious, so grave an expression of concern, that her heart instantly misgave her, though she said nothing more at the time.

Mrs. de Burgh entered the breakfast-room soon after, looking quite unconscious, merely

inquiring of Mary what news the post had brought; and only remarked that Eugene was a very idle fellow, when Mary's dejected silence bespoke her to have been disappointed in the results of its delivery; immediately after breakfast Mary heard Mr. de Burgh say, "Olivia, I wish to speak to you in the library," an unusual occurrence, unless there was anything of very especial consequence to be communicated, and then she heard the door shut upon them.

She waited half an hour in a state of anxious suspense, which in vain she strove to reason with herself was unnecessary and uncalled for. What had this interview to do with her — with Eugene? But no—it would not do; her heart still beat nervously in her bosom, and she strained her ears at every sound, to listen whether it might not be the opening of the library door, and her cousin's appearance, to reassure her, no doubt, silly apprehension.

Mary was reminded by all this of her feelings on the occasion of her anticipated interview with Louis, after his having been informed of her

engagement with Eugene, and the step she had taken to put an end to the nervous impulse under which she then had laboured.

No doubt she would find her intrusion on this occasion perfectly uncalled for ; but still her presence was never unwelcome, and to relieve her mind of its present uneasiness, she could at that moment have braved any contingency.

So to the library she proceeded, opened the door, and entered.

“ But what is the use of telling her anything about it, poor thing ! till she gets to London ? For Heaven’s sake, wait till then.”

This was what she heard ; and if there had been any doubt on Mary’s mind, as to whether these words bore reference to herself, the confused and disconcerted countenances of both Mr. and Mrs. de Burgh, when they became aware of her presence, too fully assured her on that point ; and advancing, pale and trembling, towards her cousins, she at once faltered forth :

“ Louis—Olivia ! have you heard anything of Eugene ? Is he ill ? or what has happened ?” and then she burst into tears.

"No, no, dear Mary, there is nothing the matter with Trevor—he is quite well."

Mr. de Burgh hastened to confirm this, and in the gentlest, kindest manner made her sit down by his side.

"The fact is," he said, "I have had a letter from him this morning, which may possibly damp your spirits a little for the moment, although it can, of course, be of no ultimate importance, only defer expected happiness to a remoter period."

Mary, drying her eyes, anxiously waited for him to proceed.

"Trevor writes me word that his marriage, owing, it seems, to some rather serious business, must of necessity be postponed, he does not say till when. But you see," he continued, breaking off into a more cheerful and encouraging tone of voice, "there is nothing so fatally unfortunate in this."

No, indeed, it was not the bare fact those words conveyed which bowed down Mary's trembling spirit, and gave such wan and wintry sadness to the smile with which she attempted

to acknowledge her cousin's comforting words. It was not the mere intelligence that her marriage was postponed which fell like a cloud upon her soul, it was that dark presentiment which often on occasions of less or greater magnitude assails the mind of man, that the happy prosperity of his life has reached its culminating point: that the point is turned, and henceforth it must take a downward course.

"But why," she faltered, now glancing towards Mrs. de Burgh, who sat silent and distressed, "why did he not write and tell me this himself?"

"I think, dear Mary, Louis had better tell you what Eugene said in his letter, which was to him, not to me. I will come back presently," and rising, Mrs. de Burgh kissed Mary's pale cheek, and gladly made her escape from the thing she particularly dreaded—painful circumstances over which she could have no control; so Mary once more turned her plaintive glance of inquiry upon her cousin Louis.

"Here is his letter!" Mr. de Burgh replied; "if you would like to read it, it may be as well

that you should do so, as it is all I know, or understand about the matter."

Mary took the letter in her trembling hand, and steadying it as she could—read in her lover's hand-writing the following communication, which, from the concise, unvarnished manner in which it was conveyed, led one rather to suspect that it had never been intended for the eye of his tender-hearted lady-love, but, with the well-known proverb respecting "fine words," &c. uppermost in his mind—penned rather for the private benefit of one of his own strong-minded species.

"Dear de Burgh,

"You will, I am sure, be surprised, when I tell you that circumstances have lately arisen which render it impossible that my marriage can take place as soon as I had hoped and expected. I need not tell you that my distress and vexation are extreme, the more so, that I am forced to be convinced of the expediency, nay, necessity of this postponement, finding it quite impossible, under the present position of

affairs, that with any justice to Mary, our union could be concluded. Of course more particular explanation will be required; but I write this merely to beg that either you or Olivia will break to her this intelligence, of which I feel it right she should not be kept in ignorance, I am myself quite unequal to communicate with her upon the subject. Tell her only that I am concerned and disappointed beyond expression, that I will write to her brother more fully, or to any of her friends who may desire it; but that I cannot, dare not, trust myself to put pen to paper to address her till I can see my way more clearly.

“Believe me, ever, dear de Burgh,

“Yours most sincerely,

“EUGENE TREVOR.”

A large tear rolled down Mary's cheek as she refolded and laid aside the letter.

“Poor Eugene!” she murmured gently, “how unhappy he seems to be! You will write to him, Louis; will you not?” she added: “If so, do tell him I am grieved, disappointed,

for his sake, but that he must not distress and harass himself on my account—that he must be patient till these obstacles are removed. Our happiness has, till now, been too great and uninterrupted for us to have expected that it could continue without any thing to rise and mar the smoothness of its course; we shall only prize it the more when it is restored, and love each other the more firmly for this little reverse.”

“Had you not better perhaps write and tell him all this yourself?” said Mr. de Burgh, with a smile of kind and gentle interest.

“I think perhaps I had better not,” she answered sadly. “You see he does not like to write to me upon the subject, so perhaps it would distress him the more to hear from me just now. I know it is a peculiarity in Eugene to shrink from the direct discussion of any circumstance painful and annoying to his feelings. Tell him therefore, also—if you, Louis, will be so kind as to write—not to think it necessary to enter into any particulars at present, with my brother, or any one else. It is quite bad enough for him to be troubled by

these affairs, without further annoyance being added to the business. I am quite satisfied with what he has imparted—quite satisfied as to the expediency and necessity of our marriage being deferred—that I can wait, and shall be content patiently to wait, as long as it shall be required.”

Yes, Mary, wait—wait—learn patiently to wait—it is woman’s lesson, which, sooner or later, your sex must learn, and of which your meek soul will have but too full experience ! The cup of joy so temptingly presented “to lips that may not drain,” but instead—the sickening hope deferred—the long heart thirst—yet still to patiently hold on, awaiting meekly her lingering reward. “Bearing all things, believing all things, hoping all things, enduring all things.”

The few last days previous to a departure, is under any circumstances, generally a somewhat uncomfortable and unsettled period. Our Silver-ton party were doubly relieved by its expiration. Eugene’s letter seemed to have cast a damp over their general spirits.

Mrs. de Burgh, evidently puzzled and perplexed, was at a loss how to treat the subject,

when discussing it with Mary ; whilst Louis, far from seeming elated at this hitch in an affair of which he had always professed such unqualified disapprobation, was evidently sorry and annoyed at this disturbance of his cousin's peace of mind, and whilst more than ever, kind and affectionate in his demeanour towards herself, was unusually out of humour with every one around him.

As for Mary, she walked about more like a person half awakening from a long and happy dream, who feels herself struggling hard not to break the pleasant spell. It seemed to her, that there was a dull and silent vacuum reigning over the large mansion, she had never before perceived. She looked wearily from the window upon the dreary December scene, and it seemed that almost for the first time she became aware that it was not the bright summer month which had marked her first arrival. She felt that now, she also would be glad to go.

What ! glad to leave the spot where, who knows poor Mary, but that the brief bright summer time of your existence has passed and gone ? For there is a summer time in the life

of every mortal being—a more or less bright, passionate ecstatic season of enjoyment, though wofully — fearfully evanescent are the flowers and leaves which mark some mortals' summer time.

But why lament for this—if, may be, the autumn with its calm cool chastened light be longer thine ?

The morning of departure arrived—and pale and passive in the midst of all the bustle and excitement attendant on the starting of a large family party, composed of servants, children, a lady suffering from the nervous and uncomfortable feelings attendant on her situation, and a rather fidgetty, impatient husband — pale and passive, yet with an inwardly bruised and sinking sensation of the heart, Mary entered the carriage, and was soon borne far away from the vicinity of Silverton and Montrevor.

CHAPTER IV.

Oh, thou dark and gloomy city !
Let me turn my eyes from thee ;
Sorrow, sympathy nor pity,
In thy presence seems to be ;
Darkness like a pall hath bound thee—
Shadow of thy world within—
With thy drear revealings round me,
Love seems vain, and hope a sin.

L. E. L.

MARY on her arrival in London, went straight to Portman Square, where she was received with affectionate gladness by her venerable relations.

They, of course, had been amongst the first to be made aware of their niece's matrimonial prospects, and proud and happy did the intelligence render the worthy pair. Full and hearty were the congratulations poured upon

the pale and drooping *fiancée*,—to be silenced for the time by the dejected answer :

“ Yes, dear aunt, but for the present our marriage is postponed.”

After this first ordeal, there was something not ungenial to Mary's state of mind in the orderly and quiet monotony of the old-fashioned, yet comfortable establishment of the Majoribanks. Their daughter was remarkable for nothing but that indolence of habit and disposition which a long sojourn in the luxurious East often engenders, and made little more impression upon Mary's mind, than the costly shawls in which the orientalized lady at rare intervals appeared enveloped ; whilst some little creatures, chattering in an outlandish tongue, and attended by a dark-hued ayah, only occasionally excited her present vague, languid powers of interest and attention.

London in December bears by no means an inviting and exhilarating aspect ; still there are moods and conditions of minds with which at this season it better assimilates than in its more bright and genial periods. No glare,

or glitter, or display then distracts our spirits. Over the vast city and its ever-moving myriads, seems to hang one dark, thick, impenetrable veil, beneath whose dingy folds, joy and misery, innocence and crime, indigence and wealth, alike hurry on their way, undistinguishable and indistinct. Men are to our eyes "as trees walking,"—by faint, uncertain glimpses we alone recognise the face of friend or foe, who see us not—or, in our turn, are seen, by those we unconsciously pass by.

Then, and there, in the "dark grey city," more than in "the green stillness of the country," we can retire into the sanctuary of our own sad hearts—or beneath this vague and dreamy influence the poet's heart may wander undisturbed, and as he "hears and feels the throbbing heart of man," may calmly image forth his destined theme for thought, or song. "The river of life that flows through streets, tumultuous, bearing along so many gallant hearts, so many wrecks of humanity;—the many homes and households, each a little world in itself, revolving round its fireside,

as a central sun ; all forms of human joy, and suffering brought into that narrow compass ; and to be in this, and be a part of this, acting, thinking, rejoicing, sorrowing with his fellow-men."

Poor Mary ! she too went forth, and walked, or drove, as beneath one dim, broad shadow ; everything without her and within, vague, dreamy, and indistinct, except when some pale face or dark eye startled her momentarily from her trance, by their fancied or seeming similitude to that loved being, whom some suddenly eclipsing power, like the one now veiling the wintry sun, had hidden from her aching sight,—but of whom, each day, she lived in sure but anxious anticipation of receiving tidings either in person or by letter.

Mary had not written to her brother Arthur on the subject of Eugene's letter till she came to London, then so lightly did she touch upon the matter it contained, giving her brother merely to understand that her marriage was deferred for a short period ; that he only in his reply expressed pleasure at the idea that he was not to lose her quite so soon, and at the

same time mentioned his intention of remaining in Edinburgh a little longer than he had previously intended, according to the urgent solicitations of his sister Alice, who had so few opportunities of enjoying the society of her relations—and at the same time, for the more interested purpose of reaping as long as he was able the benefit of his lawyer brother-in-laws' valuable counsel and assistance on the subject upon which his mind was so keenly set; affording so excellent a preparation for those regular studies, in which, after the Christmas vacation, he was to engage as member of the Middle Temple.

And thus the affectionate brother remained in perfect ignorance that anything was amiss in the concerns of his favourite sister, during this protracted absence. But the old couple of course soon began to require some more defined explanation as to the state of affairs, and an interview with Mr. de Burgh, when he called one morning to see Mary, did not tend to throw any very satisfactory light upon the subject. All that he could inform them concerning

the matter was, that some business was pending, which would prevent the marriage from taking place as soon as had been intended ; that Mrs. de Burgh had heard from her cousin, Mr. Trevor, who seemed to be considerably distressed by this impediment, and to shrink from holding any direct communion with his betrothed until matters had assumed a more favourable aspect ; that he announced his intention of coming up to town as soon as he could possibly leave his father, who was suffering from another dangerous attack of illness. Until such time he, Mr. de Burgh, supposed there was nothing to be done, particularly as Mary's own solicitations were most urgent to that effect ; and she, indeed, poor girl, always professed herself perfectly satisfied that all was right.

Ah, how could it be otherwise ? the bare idea was treason to her confiding, trustful heart.

Mary did not see a great deal of Mrs. de Burgh after her first arrival.

It is astonishing how great a barrier a few streets and squares of the metropolis can form

against the intercourse of dearest and most familiar friends. Mrs. de Burgh was ill at first and uncomfortable herself, and it only distressed her to see Mary under the present unsatisfactory aspect of affairs. Then her confinement intervened, and after that she was surrounded by other friends, whose society was unassociated with the painful feelings, which by that time had occurred to throw a still greater constraint over her intercourse with the pale, sad Mary.

How characteristic this is of the general friendship of worldly people. How warm, how bright, has been the affection showered upon us when we were gay, glad, or hopeful. But let some cloud arise to dim our aspect, let our spirits droop, our brow be overcast, then, though they may not love us less—though they may feel for and pity us, nay, would do much to restore our happiness, if in their power; yet if that cannot be—then—“come again when less sad and sorrowful, when your lips once more can give back smile for smile — when your voice has lost these notes of deep dejection, *then*, oh, come again, and we will with open arms receive

you, and our love be as fond, as fervent, as unconstrained ; but till then — away! you chide our spirits, you restrain our mirth.”

This is the language which seems to breathe from every altered look and tone of our worldly friends.

* * * *

Mary went one day to see her cousin. She found Olivia on the sofa, looking a little delicate, but only the more beautiful from that cause, as well as from the subdued, softened expression of her countenance.

Her husband sat affectionately by her side, the brightest satisfaction beaming from his handsome features, gazing upon his lovely wife, and new-born son, a fine healthy infant, resting on the mother's bosom.

It was altogether a perfect picture of happy family prosperity, and tears of heartfelt pleasure rose to Mary's eyes at the sight.

She wished and prayed that it might be an earnest of the establishment of a happier and better state of things between that married pair ; that the long slumbering, or diverted demonstra-

tion of affection, now reawakened or recalled, might never again be put to silence, or lose their reasserted power. Alas ! for the transitory nature of pure and holy influences like the present, upon the light, inconstant, or the wordly hearted ; influences of time, or circumstances, which like the shaken blossoms of the spring, the breath of vanity or dissipation can in a moment dispel and scatter to the ground.

"They never came to fruit, and their sweet lives soon
are o'er,
But we lived an hour beneath them, and never dreamed
of more."

At least thus we regret to say, it proved with regard to any temporary influence to which Mrs. de Burgh might have been subjected. For her convalescence, and the allurements and temptations of the ensuing season, tended too surely to the overthrow of those hopes and aspirations, in which poor Mary so rejoiced, in behalf of her cousin Louis and his beautiful wife. But this is wandering from the regular progress of our story.

CHAPTER V.

I am not false to thee, yet now
Thou hast a cheerful eye ;
With flushing cheek and drooping brow,
I wander mournfully.

Thou art the same ; thy looks are gay,
Thy step is light and free,
And yet, with truth, my heart can say,
I am not false to thee.

MRS. NORTON.

SPRING was fast advancing. Arthur Seaham had returned some time from Scotland, and had entered as a student of the Temple. The Morgans had arrived in London, yet the cloud seemed only to thicken the more round Mary's prospects.

The friends had ceased to pain her ears by any open animadversion of her lover. They

seemed to wait in moody silence the issue of affairs; the dangerous and precarious condition, in which they had ascertained that his father still remained—giving rise, in a great measure, to the idea suggested by a vague hint from the son, that on this circumstance depended the removal of the impediment which he professed had arisen against his marriage—still excusing his non-appearance.

And Mary—though not to hear mention of that beloved name, was to her almost as great an agony, as to know that injurious and supicious thoughts were silently harboured in the breast of those around her, against that one loved being; and though her cheek day by day was becoming more pale, her heart more sinking—yearning for her lover's exculpation—yet more she still lived hopefully, trustfully, sure that all would eventually be right.

Day by day, she thought "he will be here," sometimes that he might even then be in London, only waiting to make his presence known until his anxious consultations with his lawyers had set his mind more at rest.

Mary was sometimes induced to accept the urgent solicitations of her sister Agnes to accompany herself and Sir Hugh, to such places of public amusement as the yet early season rendered admissible.

Lady Morgan, blooming and happy as ever youthful wife could be ; with her indulgent husband, upon whom his continental sojourn, together with the influence of his handsome young spouse, had produced quite a polishing and refining effect, were established in a fashionable hotel, for the short space of time which now, alas ! that there was no marriage to be celebrated, they intended—this season—to remain in London.

One night, when on the point of issuing from their private box at one of the minor theatres, where they had been witnessing the performance of a famous actress, a party of men, who had apparently occupied one of the lower boxes on the same side of the house, rushed quickly past, laughing and talking with light and careless glee.

Some glanced slightly on the young Lady

Morgan ; who happened to stand forward at the time, and whose appearance momentarily attracted their attention ; but Mary, without being seen from her position behind her sister, caught sight of the party as they passed.

Why did the beatings of her heart stand still—that sick faint chill creep over her ? could it be—oh, could it indeed be Eugene ! nearly foremost of that group, whose dark eye had flashed that cursory glance upon her sister, as he hurried by—whose voice, in that well known cheerful laugh (at least so it had ever been to Mary's ears) had echoed on her heart, her anxious, longing, saddened heart ?

Oh ! could it be—and was it thus she now beheld him—he, whose last embrace still thrilled her frame—whose parting kiss still lingered on her lips —unconscious of her presence, careless, unthinking of her grief.

Yes, thus she first beheld him, for whom she had so long watched and waited,—and wept, when none were near.

“ Mary dear, are you there ? ” her sister said looking back, when they had stepped out into

the passage. "But, my dear darling, how pale you look. Sir Hugh," she exclaimed quite reproachfully to her husband, "pray give Mary your arm," and with repentant alacrity the Baronet hastened to offer his assistance to his half-fainting sister-in-law. "It was the heat—the gas," poor Mary murmured; "she would be better when they went into the air."

And she did then seem to revive, and entering the carriage, told not a word of what had occurred to trouble her; nor hinted the fact of having seen Eugene, (if indeed her bewildered fancy had not deceived her), even to her brother, when she saw him on the morrow.

No, still in hope and trust, she waited patiently. The very next night but one after this occurrence, she was again called for by her sister and brother-in-law, to accompany them to the opera, but just re-opened for the season.

Oh! the wistful earnestness of that sad eye, straining its aching sight to discern some inmate of the opposite boxes, of the stalls below, who, for one deceiving moment, made her heart

beat fast, by some fancied similitude with the object of her thoughts. But no, the vision of the night before was not to be renewed on this occasion, though of its reality—which at times she was almost inclined to doubt—she was not to leave the house quite unassured.

Mary and her sister were waiting in the round room, expecting the return of Sir Hugh, who had gone to look for the carriage; Lady Morgan, talking to a gentleman with whom she was acquainted, when Mary's attention was rivetted by the colloquy between two men, who had previously passed them in the vestibule, and near whom they again found themselves standing, evidently without the former being aware of their vicinity.

“Oh, yes!” said one, “that was Lady Morgan, the young wife of the rich Sir Hugh, the Welsh baronet, more than twice her age; a fine looking young woman; but did you see that pale, pretty girl who was with them; do you know that she is Miss Seaham, her sister, Eugene Trevor's intended.”

“Ah, indeed? I saw Trevor to-day, and

congratulated him, but I thought he did not seem much to like the subject."

"No indeed; I hear he is rather trying to back out of the affair. Some spoke in the wheel, I suppose about money matters, and the old father who was thought to be dying, seems to have picked up again."

"Well, I should think there were a few things besides money, which would rather stand in the way," was the reply, and then the speakers lowered their voices as they talked on, and Mary heard—and wished to hear no more.

"Dear Agnes, shall we go on? There is Sir Hugh coming," and Lady Morgan felt a gentle pressure on her fair round arm, and looking back, caught sight once more of her sister's pale and piteous countenance.

"My poor, dear Mary, these places certainly do not suit you," whispered her affectionate young *chaperone*, as she passed her sister's trembling arm through hers, and pressed onwards through the crowd to meet her husband. "I must really carry you back

with me as soon as possible to our mountain breezes."

"Would that I had never left them, Aggy!" murmured poor Mary in low plaintive accents, whilst an uncontrollable flood of tears came to her full heart's relief.

* * * * *

The very next day, Mary set out on one of those expeditions, which at this time might be called her only real enjoyment—namely, her visits to her brother in his chambers at the Temple; often, as was the case on this occasion, to bring him back to dine in Portman Square.

The Majoribanks' chariot, with its fat, slow, sleek horses, and steady attendants, being conceded to her special use this evening; she went forth heavy at heart, but anxiously striving to rally her spirits, to meet her brother with that cheerfulness which in his society she ever strove (and found it less difficult than under other circumstances) to assume. It was rather early to proceed straight to the Temple, and therefore Mary had agreed with her aunt, that

she should go first to execute some commissions in the opposite direction.

We can easily imagine from what source alone the interest could spring, with which her sad eyes gazed through the carriage windows, as she passed through some of the streets in this quarter.

Did she not know that somewhere in this vicinity, Eugene always lodged when he came to town. And oh! to be passing perhaps the very door of the house that contained him, was the gasping utterance of her heart, as she swallowed down the tears which struggled upwards at this suggestion.

"But he—he does not care—he can be happy and cheerful without me," was the still more bitter thought which succeeded, as she shrank back in the carriage in dark and tearless dejection.

But from this she is aroused by one of those matter-of-fact realities of common life, which form fortunate and salutary breaks in the tragic, or the romance of man's existence.

The carriage stops before a fancy workshop



in Bond Street, where many colours for her aunt's worsted work are to be matched or chosen.

Mary does not herself alight; but gives a few directions to the well initiated footman, who knows perfectly how to give the order—better indeed perhaps than she herself—and sits in patient abstraction till the man's return. He reappears, puts the parcel into the carriage, then draws abruptly back, for some one has touched his arm, and signs that he should give place.

Mary languidly lifts her eyes, and Eugene is before her. The place and circumstance of this meeting, admitted not at first of any very open demonstration of feeling, such as must necessarily have been excited. A few low, hurried, agitated sentences were uttered by Trevor, as he bent forward into the carriage towards Mary, whose pale lips could scarcely articulate incoherent expressions of her sudden joy.

Then, by a peremptory gesture from the gentleman, the servant is commanded to let down the steps. He obeys. Trevor springs in. The door is closed; a moment's whispered

consultation, and in faltering tones Mary gives orders to be driven to the Temple, and the carriage rolls off in that direction.

Once more alone together—once more by Eugene's side—Mary sees already the cloud dispersed—fear, doubt, misgiving, vanished from her path.

How comes it, then, that misery and bewilderment is the confused impression which this interview shall afterwards leave upon her mind? How is it, that for the most part of that long way, she sits weeping silently, her cold hand trembling in the burning palm of Eugene?—he now in low, despairing accents bemoaning his grief, his pain—now passionately cursing his wretched fortunes, his fatal circumstances?

But no explanation—no hope—no promised deliverance from the sorrow or the evil.

Once, indeed, in a low and hurried tone, he breathed into her ear the notion of a clandestine marriage—a secret union—one to be kept concealed till such a time as the present necessity for secrecy should be at an end; the idea pro-

bably suggested to his mind by passing one of those dark, often magnificent, but almost unfrequented churches, so well suited, to all appearance, for the celebration of mysterious rites and secret ceremonies, which rear their heads in some of the close, dark streets of the city. But the firm, though gentle withdrawal of her hand, the look of almost cold astonishment which marked her reception of this desperate proposition, sufficed to convey to Eugene Trevor's mind the full conviction that with all her yielding tenderness, her feminine weakness of disposition, never must he hope to tempt his gentle, pure-hearted love from the right, straight road of principle and duty into any crooked path of deviating, or questionable proceeding.

"No, no, Eugene!" seemed to speak the sadly averted countenance. "No, no, Eugene; the grief, the sin, the shame, whatever it may be, that now stands between us, can never be set aside, be overstepped by such unworthy means as you suggest. I can suffer, I can wait, I can make every other sacrifice for your sake; but I cannot err—I cannot thus deceive."

But suddenly, during the dreary pause that succeeded, Mary's eye recognises some passing object, calling forth a momentary interest in her mind, even in this moment of concentrated absorption of feeling.

She makes a quick forward movement of surprise; but when Eugene looked inquiringly, as if to discern the cause of her apparent interest, the momentary excitement died away, and she answered with melancholy composure:

"It was only that I saw Mr. Temple pass—he of whom, you know, I told you once."

"What—who—Eus—Temple I mean, did you say? Are you certain—quite certain?" he exclaimed, with anxious, eager excitement, far surpassing any which the recognition had excited in her own breast; "are you sure—quite sure that it was he?"

"Yes," with a sigh; "I do not think I could be mistaken, for he looked so earnestly into the carriage; but why—why, Eugene," looking at her lover with a faint, melancholy smile, and some expression of surprise, "why should it thus excite you?"

"My own dear love," Eugene now said, regaining possession of her hand, and trying also to assume a forced smile, as well as tone of careless unconcern, "I was not particularly excited, but you know I cannot help feeling a slight degree of interest in that man after what you told me. And did he see us? you, dearest, I mean?" he continued, still with a degree of anxious solicitude in his tone.

"Yes, I think, I am almost sure, he did," she wearily replied, and then her exhausted feelings sunk her again into a state of hopeless, listless dejection.

And Eugene sat too, for a few minutes, plunged in anxious, thoughtful silence, from which he was aroused by a glance towards the windows, reminding him that they were approaching closely to Mary's destination.

Immediately, with an exclamation of despair, he pulls the check-string and the carriage stops; the servant is at the door. There was but a bewildered hasty parting. Trevor springs out into the street, turns upon Mary one expressive, eager glance, and he is gone! The

carriage proceeds a little way, and then rolls within the Temple gates, and Mary is found by her brother, when he comes hurrying down to meet her, pale, trembling, nearly hysterical, from the effects of all her nerves and feelings had undergone.

CHAPTER VI.

Me, the still "London" not the restless "Town"
(The light plume fluttering o'er Cybele's crown,)
Delights;—for there the grave romance hath shed
Its hues, and air grows solemn with the dead.

THE NEW TIMON.

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time.

LONGFELLOW.

WHAT was the matter?—what had happened?
—was Arthur Seaham's anxious inquiry, when
having for greater privacy entered the car-
riage, he had sat a few minutes by Mary's side,
tenderly and soothingly holding her hand —
till the first paroxysm of emotion, (which to his

astonishment and dismay, greeted his first appearance) was in a degree subsided.

A few broken words, threw light upon the matter. She had seen—she had just parted from Eugene. Arthur pressed no further question at the moment, but proposed taking her up-stairs to his chambers, to give her wine to recruit the poor girl's agitated spirits ; but this Mary declined. She only wanted air ; she felt suffocated by the heat and confinement of the carriage. She would like to get out, and walk home.

But the brother would not agree to this. It would be much too far for her to walk just now. No, the carriage should wait, and they might take a few turns in the court and gardens. The students were all in Hall—they would be quite undisturbed. To the court then they accordingly proceeded, Mary leaning on her brother's arm, and the quiet refreshment of that quaint old spot, upon this mild spring evening ; its fresh green grass plot, sparkling fountain and overhanging elms, just then putting forth their early shoots, and between which the

venerable walls and buttresses, of the Temple Hall, revealed their sober beauties ; the sweet notes of a thrush sounding from the garden below. All these combined, affording as it did, so strong a contrast to the din, stir, and turmoil from without, as well as the bewildering disquiet and agitation through which her mind had lately passed, did not fail to produce its soothing influence on poor Mary's nerves and spirits ; and seated upon one of the benches of the court, she was able, with tolerable composure, to unburden the trouble of her heart to that dear, kind brother, till it became almost a soothing relief to dilate upon the distressing, and unsatisfactory nature of the late interview with her lover.

Arthur listened sorrowfully and compassionately to his sister's melancholy relation of the blight, which had fallen on the unalloyed happiness of which he had found her in such full enjoyment on his return to England. He remembered her bright and happy countenance then—and the change it now exhibited, so touched and saddened the young man's feelings at the time, that he only held Mary's hand, and

sympathized, soothed, and cheered with words of encouragement—neither expressing blame, anger, or suspicion, against the originating source of all this woe.

But at length when Mary said : “ And now, dear Arthur, I want you to assist me, I think something should be done—something ascertained—anything will be better than this miserable state of uncertainty and suspense,” he looked up quickly with a sudden, impatient flash from his bright blue eye, and answered :

“ Yes indeed, Mary. I think so too, something must, and shall be done.”

“ But listen to me dear Arthur,” she continued mildly. “ What I should wish to ascertain would be, whether, under the present circumstances of affairs—whatever they may be—Eugene’s engagement to me, involves him in any unforeseen trouble or annoyance ; for,” she added very sadly, “ if I thought that were the case—”

“ Would you give him up ?” her brother quickly rejoined, with something of pleasurable hope lighting up his countenance, as he seized upon the idea suggested.

“Give him up! Oh, cruel words and easily spoken!” Mary averted her head, but with a deep drawn sigh, and forced calmness, continued: “I could never give Eugene up, unless,” and again a sorrowful sigh, as she thought upon similar words spoken in a formerly recorded conversation, “unless Eugene himself desired it; or, that I discovered it was necessary or expedient, to his comfort or prosperity that I should do so. If it were really so; or, should it be more for his ease that some definite period, one of any length, or duration, should be agreed upon, for the postponement of our marriage, he need not fancy I should impatiently shrink from such an engagement. And it is this, that I should like to be conveyed to Eugene. I would write—but writing is so very painful, and unsatisfactory, under such circumstances; I can quite enter into poor Eugene’s feelings on that point. I would ask you, dear Arthur, to go and speak to him—if,” and she looked anxiously into her brother’s face, “if I could be *quite certain*, if I could quite trust you in the matter—if I

could be perfectly sure that you would not allow your jealous affection for myself, to outrun your kindness and consideration towards Eugene. Arthur, if you went to him could you promise. Oh, I am sure you will not take from me the stay, and comfort, I can in this emergency feel alone in you—you will promise that no harsh, reproachful, or uncourteous word shall escape your lips, on the subject of my concerns."

"Mary, dear," the young man replied with still somewhat of a knit and moody brow, "I will do anything to serve and please you; but I only want open and straight forward dealings in this affair. It is all this equivocating, tantalizing mystery that I can neither abide or understand. But," he continued, as Mary again droopingly listened to his words, "I am not so selfish as to let any impatient temper of my own, stand in the way of your comfort or gratification; I will do all that you desire. I will go to Trevor, and *on this occasion*, act and speak, as from your own trusting, loving, self."


Mary's spirit was again calmed and revived by this promise of her brother's, and after a little more anxious conversation on the subject, Arthur Seaham sought further to compose her spirits and divert her mind, before leaving the classic spot in which they found themselves. He conducted her down the Italian descent into the garden with the broad river gliding sluggishly below that parterre, which in the summer months from its trees and flowers, is so deserving of the name, but which a poet's hand has made to bloom with "roses above the real."

He strove also to excite and amuse her intelligent fancy by pointing out, and particularizing some of the principal points and buildings of this ancient and interesting seat of learning, ran over the names of those, who from "the great of old," to more modern, but none the less eminent instances, had either in connection with law, literature, or wit, graced or sanctified its precincts by their presence and abode. And he playfully asserted that, amongst those, he, Arthur Seaham, intended most surely one day to rank.

“Bye the bye, talking of great men, Mary,” the young man suddenly exclaimed, “from whom do you think I have had a visit, to-day? From Mr. Temple.”

“Indeed!” answered Mary, with no slight display of interest, “then I was right, it really was him who passed us just now.”

“Yes, no doubt it was, for he had scarcely left me a quarter of an hour, before you arrived; he is on the eve of leaving England for the continent, and came, I fancy, to carry away the latest intelligence concerning you, Mary; for he made anxious enquiry with regard to your marriage, the report of which, it seems, reached his ears; though it appears he left Wales some months ago, and has since been living, in great seclusion, in some quiet, antiquated nook, in this very neighbourhood. Mary, what can be the history of that man? What a superior being does his countenance, his whole bearing, bespeak him to be, and yet—that some blight has fallen upon his existence, is but too evident. He gives one the idea of some being led forth from a higher sphere,



“ ‘To act some other spirit’s destiny,
Not allowed to hit the scope
At which their nature aims—
Who pass away,’ ”

continued the young man, in the words of the suggested quotation :

“ ‘Having in themselves
A better destiny all unfulfilled,
A holier, milder being, unenvolved !’

“ But, dear Mary, he is much altered since I saw him last. He was then like one in whom suffering had been nobly subdued, a holy calm seemed to have settled on his soul, a strength, not his own, to have been vouchsafed him. To-day he looked ill in body, and worn in mind. I cannot but think that since that time he has suffered, and is still suffering, from some newly arisen source of pain, or disquietude ; and my dear sister,” Arthur added, with a smile of playful accusation, “ I cannot help suspecting that you have something to do with the distress, now weighing on the mind of this remarkable, but most mysterious man. The agitation of

his voice and manner when he spoke of you, Mary, was not to be concealed."

"Oh, Arthur, do not say so!" Mary exclaimed, with sorrowful earnestness, shrinking from the idea of herself being the cause of sufferings, such as she now so well could understand, but especially to that good, great, and almost venerated man. "And what did you tell him about my engagement?" she faintly enquired.

"All I knew, Mary; with him I felt reserve to be both useless and unnecessary. He listened to my intelligence with the greatest interest and attention, but in silence, and almost immediately after, arose to take his leave. I ventured to add, that I was sure it would have given you pleasure to have seen him. He shook his head with a sad smile, and said, 'he had seen *you* more than once since you came to London.' Dear Mary, you seem as if doomed to mystery in your lovers; and shall I tell you something more singular still? I was much struck by something in Temple which strongly reminded me of Trevor. Not exactly feature,

and not at all expression, but a something I cannot well define."

Mary sadly shook her head. There had been at times some vague impression of the same kind made upon her own mind ; but at present fancy was too languid to realise the suggestion.

They returned to the carriage, for though the early dinner-hour of their kind, old-fashioned relations had been deferred expressly for their nephew's convenience, they almost feared that they should even now have trespassed on the good old people's consideration.

But Mary regretfully parted from the calm and silent spot, over which the shades of evening were now fast gathering, imparting a still greater air of solemn tranquillity to the scene. And often in days to come, when the poignant anguish then and there so softened and assuaged, had again died away, never to be recalled by the powers of memory — the place, and the hour, would float back upon her recollection—like the oasis amidst the parching sterility of the desert, to the grateful

traveller—divested of all but their vague soothing and pleasurable associations.

On their way back to Arthur's chamber door, they fell in with several of his fellow students, just coming out of Hall.

They all respectfully stepped aside, and made way for "Seaham and his sister."

Arthur had already rendered himself not only a most popular and general favourite, but much respected, member of the Temple community, by his sociable, engaging—yet at the same time, steady, gentlemanly, and superior conduct and deportment.

CHAPTER VII.

Oh, what authority and show of truth
Can cunning sin cover itself withal !

SHAKESPEARE.

Thus men go wrong with an ingenious skill,
Bend the straight rule to their own crooked will.

COWPER.

THAT same night, Arthur Seaham called on Eugene Trevor at the hotel, in which he had easily ascertained the latter to be established.

He did not entertain much hope of finding him at home at that hour, but purposed proceeding there to demand an interview the following day. He was more fortunate than he expected.

He was told that Mr. Trevor was in the house, and it was not a little in Eugene's

favour (in the brother's eyes) that he found him seated in a private room in the hotel, plunged in melancholy meditation, over the remains of a solitary dinner.

He looked up a little startled and surprised, when the name of his visitor was announced; but immediately arose, and shook hands cordially with the young man, expressing his pleasure at seeing him again. Then when the waiter, who staid to clear the table, had withdrawn and closed the door, and Arthur, who had replied to his greeting with somewhat of distant gravity, had seated himself silently on an opposite chair, Trevor at once, with eyes a little averted, said :

“ Seaham, I can well guess what business has brought you here to-night. You come, of course, to speak upon the subject of your sister.”

“ I have come *to-night, from* my sister,” was the calm, but somewhat emphasized reply.

“ Indeed !” with a nervous uncertainty in his tone, which had not been perceptible in his former utterance. “ She, Mary, told you, I suppose, of that most wretched meeting this afternoon.”

"She did," Arthur Seaham again coldly replied; "and it was the nature of that meeting which made her desirous to communicate with you, through me, feeling herself unequal to treat the subject, as fully and satisfactorily as she had wished, by letter."

He again paused; and Trevor fixed his eyes upon the young man's face in anxious, agitated inquiry.

"You cannot suppose," Arthur continued, with an effort at calm moderation in his tone, "that the interview to which you allude was calculated much to raise my sister's spirits, or throw much light on her present clouded and uncertain prospects."

Trevor bowed his head in moody assent.

"You are quite right," he muttered gloomily, a darkness gathering over his brow; "and it is but natural that you, her brother, should require, and demand, further explanation and satisfaction."

"*That*, I again repeat, is not the point which brought me here on *this occasion*," Arthur rejoined. "I come, bound by a promise to

my sister, to speak and act this night, as in her name and person, therefore, you can rest well assured," with a mingling of bitterness and tender feeling in his tone, "that in her case no explanation or satisfaction is required. No, rather, I have to assure you, that her trust and confidence still remain unmoved, and only for your own sake does she now desire and propose, that matters should be put on a more defined and certain footing ; either that she should not be suffered to stand any longer in the way of your happiness or advantage, by the continuance of your now vague and uncertain engagement, or—"

But Trevor, with much eager agitation, at this point interrupted him.

"Mary—your sister," he exclaimed, "she surely cannot, does not wish to give me up?"

The brother looked steadily into the speaker's face, as if to ascertain that the emotion, which by his tone and manner bespoke the excitement this suggestion had caused, was truthfully imaged there ; and on the whole he was not dissatisfied by the inspection ; at least, if the

deep glow first overspreading his brow, and then the ashy paleness succeeding, could be interpreted as corresponding signs of feeling ; and he replied, though with something of suppressed bitterness :

“ Her unselfish, womanly nature does not carry her so far. She is willing to make any sacrifice of her own feelings, her happiness, her affections if assured that it would tend to the removal of those—of course unforeseen, difficulties and annoyances”—with some severe stress upon the latter words, “ which your engagement to her seems suddenly to have been the means of scattering on your path. Or if not this,” he hastily added, as Trevor again made an effort to interrupt him, “ or if not this, at least she proposes that some definite period be assigned, during which full opportunity and leisure be accorded you for the arrangement or removal of the present obstacles to your marriage.”

Trevor rose abruptly, and for several minutes paced the apartment in agitated silence. Then he returned to his seat, and with more calm determination addressed his companion.

"Seaham!" he said, bending low his head as he spoke, with his downcast eyes only at intervals raised from the ground, "Seaham, let me explain to you a little the circumstances of my present position, and then you will be better able to comprehend the embarrassing perplexity of my affairs."

Arthur looked up hopefully—now at least some light was to be thrown on the impenetrable mystery of the few last months.

"It is a painful subject," continued Trevor, speaking indeed as if with difficulty; "but I must not shrink from breaking it now to you. You are aware of the situation of my unfortunate brother?"

Seaham murmured assent.

"And therefore of the ambiguous position in which I at the same time stand, with regard to my father's property—"

Arthur again assented, but observed, that Mr. de Burgh had certainly given him reason to suppose, that he—Mr. Eugene Trevor's possession of the Montrevor property after his father's death—at least, in trust for his elder

brother, was almost a decided arrangement, and that his inheritance to the most considerable part of his father's large fortune was certain; but whether or not this were the case, his sister's friends had been perfectly satisfied that even as a younger son, he must be amply provided for. Eugene hastened to interrupt Arthur Seaham by saying :

“And believe me, when I declare, that till the day I parted from your sister at Silverton, I never entertained a misgiving as to the possibility of any such obstacle, as I then, to my dismay, found to exist against the speedy completion of my marriage. The state of the case is this : My father is, and has ever been, very peculiar in his pecuniary views and arrangements. He has, as you were made to understand, most surely, and decidedly favoured me, with regard to the inheritance. I do stand in every possible respect in the position of an elder son ; but at the same time, he has more than nullified any present advantage such an arrangement could procure for me, by having so arranged his affairs, that during his lifetime I have, under the present circumstances, no power to make any settlement on my wife.”

"Under what circumstances?" quietly demanded the embryo lawyer.

"That brings me again to that one most painful point. If the present state of my unfortunate brother was clearly ascertained, then, perhaps, proceedings, from which our feelings in the first instance shrunk, might be taken, which would effectually do away with the ambiguity of my present circumstances and position."

"And why cannot the fact you mention be ascertained?" persisted Arthur, though in a tone of the most delicate consideration.

"Because," answered Trevor, with a hesitation and embarrassment of manner, which passed well for painful emotion, "because, for the last few years, my brother has entirely eluded the *surveillance* of his friends and guardians. No clue can be found, no trace of him discovered. Every search and enquiry has been—and still is in prosecution; some doubts even are entertained as to his death." He paused; then passing his hand over his brow, as if to prevent further discussion of a subject against which his feelings sensitively shrank, he finally added: "My lawyer will confirm what I have said, con-

cerning the exertions I have made on this point, if you like to refer to him," and he mentioned the name and address of the family man of business.

Arthur Seaham mused in silence for several minutes; then said:

"I am therefore to understand, that during the life time of your father, or till your brother's destination is ascertained, no further steps can be taken with regard to your marriage. One circumstance rather surprises me, that your father, aware as he must have been of the restraint thus imposed upon your powers of making a settlement upon your wife, allowed you to involve yourself so far in a matrimonial engagement. Nay, seemed in a certain degree to favour, and encourage your design."

"That," Trevor replied, "I fear is only to be understood by those, who are as well acquainted with the peculiar points of my father's disposition as myself. The quiet manner in which he took the intelligence of my intended marriage, I own surprised me at the time, knowing his extreme aversion to any measure, or proceeding, calculated in the least degree, to touch upon his ruling passion, or

as I may now term it in his present stage of existence—his ruling weakness ; that is to say, any measure that would in the least degree disturb, or infringe upon the close and arbitrary arrangements of his financial affairs—arrangements which it is the one business of his existence to maintain inviolate and undisturbed. I now discover how little cause I had to thank him for his seemingly easy acquiescence in my intended marriage, and that he has treated me,” he added in a subdued and injured tone, “far from well or kindly in the matter.”

“And you are entirely dependant on his—as it seems most tyrannical pleasure?” demanded Seaham, an angry flush mounting to his brow ; the position in which the cruel, sordid, cunning of the old man’s conduct had placed his sister, making the most impression on his feelings.

“Most unfortunately so !” was Trevor’s reply ; “it has been the aim, and purpose, of my father’s existence to render his children, and all those with whom he had to do, as much as possible dependant on his most arbitrary and capricious will. You would not think this perhaps, to behold him now—to all appearance, that meek and mild old man. But

so it is ; see him as I have lately seen him, on what was supposed to be his dying bed, and you would then have full proof and specimen before your eyes of the ruling passion strong in death."

"From all this then—I am to conclude," said Arthur Seaham, "that one of the two arrangements suggested by my sister are the only alternatives ; either," and he looked again steadily into Eugene's face, "that you give up at once all further engagement."

"To that !" interrupted Trevor, starting from his seat in sudden excitement, "to that, tell your sister," he exclaimed passionately, "I cannot, *will not consent*. Remind her of the promise she once made to me upon the subject, and tell her, that on my part, no power on earth shall compel me to give her up. No," he murmured, his eye gleaming around from beneath his now darkened brow, as if seeking to address with dark defiance some hidden foe, "no threats, no vengeful malice shall ever force me to do that."

Seaham regarded him with surprise, but thought to himself: "This man certainly loves my sister with a strength and sincerity

not to be mistaken," and then with rather softened feeling, he said :

"But you will agree perhaps to her other proposition?"

"I do—I must," with eager energy, "there is as you observed, no other alternative. Say, some months—perhaps a year. In that time much may be effected."

Trevor leant his elbow upon the mantel-piece, and pressed his brow upon his hand, in unquiet thought. Seaham rose.

"A year then," he repeated, "for a year, I may tell my sister you agree to the necessity of postponing matters. During that time," he added with marked significance, "I shall be constantly to be found in London."

"And your sister?" Trevor eagerly demanded.

"Mary will very shortly proceed to Scotland, where she may probably remain some time with my sister who lives in Edinburgh."

"What, so far?" Trevor exclaimed impatiently.

"I cannot see," the brother replied with some *hauteur*, "that a greater vicinity under present circumstances, would be either necessary

or desireable. Interviews for instance, such as the one by which my sister's feelings were so distressed to-day, can be neither for her happiness or advantage."

Trevor had no more to say. He shook hands with Arthur, who appeared to have no farther desire to remain. Like one subdued and exhausted in mind and body, almost ~~silently~~ he suffered the young man to take his leave.

Seaham merely repeated that he should be found, or could be referred to at any time at the Temple, and in a few moments had quitted the hotel.

CHAPTER VIII.

Let us then be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate,
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labour and to wait.

LONGFELLOW.

IN less than a fortnight from the period of this interview, Mary escorted by her brother-in-law, Mr. Gillespie, who had been in London on business, left England for Edinburgh.

This plan was much more accordant with her state of feeling at this period, than would have been that of accompanying her sister Agnes into Wales, as the latter was so affectionately anxious she should have done.

It would have been melancholy for her just then to have found her dear old home, Glan Pennant, in the hands of strangers, and there is

something still more melancholy to the feelings in revisiting familiar scenes, associated as they may be in the mind with naught but happy careless memories, when over the spirit of our dream has passed like a blight some subduing change, such as was now overshadowing Mary's happiness.

“ It wrings the heart to see each thing the same,
Tread over the same steps, and then to find
The difference in the heart. It is so sad,
So very lonely to be the sole one
In whom there is a sign of change.”

Besides it was very long since she had seen her sister Alice, so tied to home by her many domestic cares and duties.

Agnes' life was one as yet all holiday enjoyment—her heart bounding with delight at the prospect of an establishment in her beautiful country home—in her own dear neighbourhood.

“There was no sorrow in her note”—and Mary perceived and rejoiced in the conviction that her younger sister's happiness needed no additional weight. Next to being happy herself, she desired most the power of bestowing happiness on others, and a real pleasure she knew would be her presence to that excellent elder sister.

She would seek in some degree to aid and lighten her cares and avocations. It would have been better perhaps had she gone there, long ago. But could she bring her heart to accede to this assumption ?

Oh, no ! not yet—not now—not ever could that be.

“ I hold it true, what'er betide,
I feel it when I sorrow most,
'Tis better to have lov'd and lost
Than never to have loved at all.”

This, rather we assume, was the language of that faithful heart, still clinging too tenderly to the intense happiness of the past, to grudge the anguish of its bewildering reverse.

Clouds had arisen to obscure the heaven of her certain happiness—her once full hope had been deferred, but the day of despondency or of sickening weariness had not yet arrived.

Her lover's explanatory interview with her brother had effectually cleared, from her all believing mind, many a vague dread and anxious misgiving, which at one time were beginning to disturb her spirit ; and again she could set herself to wait patiently, buoyed up by her all enduring love—her steadfast entire trust. But this hope, and trust, beautiful in

themselves, could they be set alone on the frail and futile creature?

“Hope in the Lord wait patiently for Him, and he shall give thee thy heart’s desire. Commit thy way unto Him, and trust in Him, and He will bring it to pass.”

Surely Mary’s meek obedient soul, must have drawn its greatest strength and patience from the dictates of this high and holy invocation.

There was too, something perhaps most providentially salutary and effective, in the atmosphere of the home, where at this particular moment Mary had been led to take up her abode.

Here in the example afforded by her sister Alice’s adaptation, and appropriation of herself—her tastes, and her talents, to that one ultimate end of all, feelings and powers; the performance of her duty, in that state of life which had been assigned to her—Mary’s gentle mind, too prone perhaps, by nature to rest in passive enjoyment, and in the barren luxury of emotions, might receive a lesson, strengthening and beneficial for its future need.

“That life is not all poetry
To gentle measures set,”

“That Heaven must be won, not dreamed.”

How a mind and character, that from amongst all her sisters, had been the one most answering to her own, had effectually roused itself from the shadowy Paradise of her earlier years, to meet the real demands of life—to embrace its actual duties, and defy its uncongenial pains—and not only this, but to find therein, more than in the pleasanter summer paths of earlier days, or in those refined indulgences in which her spirit still loved at times to cherish, true happiness and peace.

“I have found peace in the bright earth,
And in the sunny sky,
I have found it in the summer seas,
And where dreams murmur by.

“I find it in the quiet tone
Of voices that I love,
By the flickering of a twilight fire,
And in a leafless grove.

“I find it in the silent flow
Of solitary thought,
In calm, half-meditated dreams,
And reasonings self-taught.

“But seldom have I found such peace
As in the soul’s deep joy,
Of passing onward free from harm,
Through every day’s employ.”

And even her brother-in-law, Mr. Gillespie, though of a less kindred soul, and with those matter of fact and prosaic points of character—attributes in his case, both national and professional. Even in his companionship, she found something bracing and effectual, such as she might not have done with more yielding and indulgent friends.

Her darling brother—it had been her former happy dream to pass her unmarried days in his companionship; and she might have been with him now, had it not been deemed, at present, neither convenient or expedient.

She must in that case have shared her brother's chambers in London; and at her age, and under her peculiar circumstances, such an arrangement could scarcely be available, without being an interruption to her brother's important studies and pursuits, though he would have made any present sacrifice for his sister's sake.

Ah, yes! or why did he turn his eyes so steadily from a sight so fascinating to his heart as was that cherub face, which often looked down upon him from a pew of the Temple Church—or bravely resist the flattering attention and

repeated hospitalities of the eminent counsel,
that cherub's father, in whose house—

“He saw her upon nearer view,
A spirit, but a woman too,”

and who seemed in every way inclined to bestow
her notice on the promising, agreeable student
of the Middle Temple?

Why?—but because he determined to allow
no cherub face to usurp the foremost place
in his affections, no “ladye love,” with form
however beautiful, to become the reigning,
mistress of his house and hearth until that
beloved sister of his youth had secured a dearer,
better home.

Besides, under any circumstances, he was
not such a fool as to think of marrying for
many a year yet; a pretty business it would be
if over the dingy pages of Blackstone, and the
year book, was for ever flitting the bewitching,
radiant face of Carrie Elliott.

Thus, then, for a time shall we leave our
heroine, whose fortunes, like the gentle flowing
course of a glistening river, we have hitherto
so undeviatingly pursued; whilst we turn aside,
not willingly, to trace through their darker,

wilder mazes, the fate and fortunes of those two beings, whom an inscrutable Providence had ordained should hold such important influence over her destiny.

CHAPTER IX.

Farewell ; and if a soul where hatred's gall
Melts into pardon, that embalmeth all,
Can with forgiveness bless thee ; from remorse
Can pluck the stone which interrupts the course
Of thought to God ; and bid the waters rest
Calm in Heaven's smile—poor fellow-man, be blest !

THE NEW TIMON.

EUGENE TREVOR was fated to encounter another interview of importance before he laid down to rest that night, or rather morning, succeeding the meeting with Arthur Seaham.

He had gone forth, very soon after the departure of the latter, to seek diversion for his disturbed and troubled spirit by excitement—that most common resource of man under similar circumstances—offered in the shape of those amusements belonging to the sporting club of which he was a member.

He returned to the hotel more than one hour after midnight, to be informed that a gentleman was waiting to see him on particular business.

“At this time of night?” was the impatient reply. “Who in the world can it be?”

The gentleman had not given his name; he had come more than two hours ago, but had expressed his intention of remaining to await Mr. Trevor’s return.

Eugene, with a certain uncomfortable feeling of misgiving at his heart, proceeded to the apartment into which his unseasonable visitor had been shown. Two candles burnt dimly on the table. Dark, pale, haggard, as the imperfect light gleamed upon his features, looked the lover of the gentle Mary, thus returning from those midnight excitements in which he had plunged to dispel too haunting thoughts and vivid memories connected with her pure and holy image; but a something of strange and startled wildness was added to their expression, as his eyes fixed themselves first uncertainly—and then gradually and clearly identified the face and form of him who stood up to receive him—that tall, commanding form, before which his own seemed

to shrink into insignificance—that face, as pale as was his own, but from before whose calm, steady gaze his eyes for an instant quailed so fearfully.

“Eustace!” — “Eugene!” were the only words or signs of greeting exchanged between them, and Trevor, as if momentarily overcome by the emotions excited by the *rencontre* with his mysterious visitor, sank upon a chair by the table, and with perturbed and agitated demeanour, passed his burning hand across his heated brow; whilst the other still stood erect, looking down upon him with that stern and steady eye, almost appalling in its intensity.

“To what am I indebted for this visit?” Eugene murmured at length, in hoarse and sullen accents, slightly lifting up his head. “I thought—”

“You thought,” replied the same deep, rich voice we last heard sounding (though then in very different accents,) upon the Welsh hill side in Mary Seaham’s ear. “You thought, Eugene, that before this coming dawn, many leagues of sea would be between us. And so it would have been, had you not your own self broken the promise which bound me to that vow.”

"Pshaw!" was the reply, in accents of impatient irony "a mere accidental, unavoidable meeting, whose only fruit was the further to overwhelm with despairing wretchedness her, for whose happiness and welfare you profess such *disinterested* regard."

"Yes!" was the calm, unmoved reply. "I saw her face turned towards me at the time, that face I had used to behold serene, happy, innocent as the angels in Heaven, and in its woeful change I read—"

"Your own most righteous work," interrupted Eugene, with a bitter mocking laugh. "Had you seen her some time past, before the day when you, like a spirit of evil, stepped in between us, you might have beheld a sight which perhaps had pleased you even less; that angel face brightened and beautified by her love for me."

"You are right, it would have pleased me even less, it would have seemed to my eyes, like the dove spreading her silver plumes, all glittering in the treacherous sunshine, to meet the vulture who has marked it for its prey. Yet to-day, I seemed not to read upon that pale and tear-stained countenance, the mere passing

misery of the moment—that misery of which I wish not to deny having been myself the inflictor—but that which I might have seen—that which I once saw settled on a mother's face; or still more haunting, terrible, impression, the despairing misery one might image of a fallen angel, dragged down from her high estate, by an unholy, unnatural alliance with a spirit of another sphere. For, Eugene, your own heart, your own conscience must convict you, that light with darkness, righteousness with unrighteousness, Christ with Belial, have as much in common, as yourself, your nature, your life, your principles, have to do with those of Mary Seaham; and that to unite yourself with her, would be, I repeat, either to draw her down to your own level—or, more blessed alternative, to break her heart. But both of these destinies I had hoped to have seen averted. You had assured me, it was easier for you to resign that 'mess of pottage' as you slightly denominated the inestimable treasure your soul had greedily, but more harmlessly marked as your own, than the birthright of which you were iniquitously possessed. You had assured me, that you would find plausible means—and in

that, I doubted not your powers, or your will, if it were but to serve your own interest—to break off, not only your engagement, but all further communication with Mary Seaham ; but, Eugene, I *doubt* you. My back once turned—my *espionage* abandoned, as I promised it should be, from the time I set my foot on another shore, what will there then be to bound or restrain your grasping, avaricious desires. I shall find myself twice trampled in the dust, and Mary,” his voice trembled as he spoke, “she whom I would save from a fate, in my eyes, worse than death, she become your prize, your sacrifice, your victim.”

He whom Eustace thus severely addressed, retained a moment's moody defiant silence.

“Your intention then, is to remain in England,” he said at length, with an assumption of haughty unconcern, though there might be perceived a quivering of the eyelids, and an expression of anxious perturbation in his downcast glance. “The old man,” with trembling irony in his tone, “will doubtless receive you gladly, and there will be nothing to retard the nuptials of Mary and myself.”

“No, nothing, if she—if Mary Seaham can

consent to wed the man"—he slightly unbarred his wrist—"the man who has done this—the man whose name must henceforth ring in her ears as a proverb, a reproach, a by-word through the paths of society—the man whose very children shall rise up and scorn him—whom God and man must alike reprobate and condemn."

Eugene Trevor shrank back as from before some deadly serpent discovered to his view. His eye quailed fearfully—his lips and cheek became of a livid, ashy hue.

"Eustace," he murmured, in a voice of almost abject deprecation—"Eustace, your feelings of revenge and hatred carry you too far. You have repented of the agreement made between us, and have come thus to threaten and intimidate me. *I* never meant to draw back from my part of the engagement; but if my promise has no weight in your consideration, how am I to give you further pledge of my sincerity? I swear to you," he continued, eagerly, "that, during the meeting to-day with Mary Seaham, into which I was accidentally surprised, I held out no hope—no promise which could give her reason to suppose that the obstacle to our marriage could now or ever

be removed. We parted with that understanding; and to-night," he spoke in a low and hurried voice, "she sent her brother here to break off our engagement, which could only be maintained on such uncertain, uncomfortable terms."

"And you consented?"

"What else had I to do?"

"Now may Heaven be praised," was the low, deep, earnest answer—the voice of the speaker swelling as into a strain of rich, clear music; whilst with upraised eyes, and countenance lit up with holy adoration, he thus ejaculated: "Now Heaven be praised, who sends His angels to protect his little ones from the powers and spirits of darkness! Eugene," he proceeded, again turning to his companion, but with a subdued and softened expression, "you, too, thank your God, that from this additional sin you have been mercifully preserved; from that offence which it were better that a millstone were hung about your neck than that you should commit. You, too, have your reward: take it. I leave it in your hands. I will trouble you no more. Home, name, country, and heritage, I willingly resign ;

but remember, on that one condition. Retain it only inviolate, for from the ends of the world, its broken faith, its most secret violation, would recall me. Farewell, Eugene! Should we never meet again on earth, believe that I forgive you all offences against me. Nor put down either to revenge, or even *madness*, that which He who seeth the heart will, I humbly trust, justify in the eyes of men and angels, before His judgment throne, on the last great day of account; and there and then, where sin and wrong, and wretchedness, shall be done away, may we both meet sanctified, reconciled, and renewed."

He was gone. No other parting sign was given; and he, who had now added one more sin to the already dark catalogue of his offences, the purchase of his freedom from a dreaded evil by a *lie*, was left darkling and alone.

As those two had met, so they parted—those two men whom our readers may already have divined were brothers.

CHAPTER X.

True, earnest sorrows ; rooted miseries ;
 . . . vexations, ripe and blown,
 Sure-footed griefs ; solid calamities ;
 Plain demonstrations, evident and clear,
 Touching their proofs e'en from the very bone—
 These are the sorrows here.

HERBERT.

MORE than six and thirty years have passed since Mr. Trevor, the present proprietor of Montrevor, had taken to himself a wife, young, lovely, of good family, and endowed with much excellence, both of mind and disposition.

Miss Mainwaring had consented, in obedience to her parents' wishes, to bestow her hand upon this rich and handsome suitor, death having deprived her of the first object of her young affections.

Of a gentle and confiding disposition, she had not doubted but that one so pleasing and gentlemanly in his manners and demeanour in society, so assiduous and devoted in his attentions during courtship, would prove an amiable, affectionate husband; and that in resigning her future destiny into his hands, she was securing to herself that calm happiness to which, (the first bright dreams of youth mellowed and subdued), she alone aspired.

Her trust was deceived—her hopes disappointed; too soon was it revealed to her sick heart that Henry Trevor, the courteous and agreeable member of society, was not the same Henry Trevor of domestic life; that Henry Trevor the lover, was a very different person to Henry Trevor the husband; that she had been wedded—for her beauty?—no; woman's natural vanity might have forgiven that:—for her fortune? no; that was comparatively insignificant to count much, even in the close calculations of him, into whose well-stored coffers it was carelessly flung:—for her gentle virtues, her superior qualities of mind?—no,—no abstract love of these had had their part in her lover's choice; but because in the

submissive spirit—in the mild and gentle character of her he saw as one

“ By suffering made sweet and meek,”

he had thought to find a fitting subject for his purpose and his will—one easy to be bent, moulded, crushed, if it were necessary, into the slave and minister of his favourite lust—his ruling passion—his besetting sin—the grasping, covetous, all-devouring love of money !

Scared and dismayed at the prospect opened, like some dark gulf so suddenly before her eyes, Mrs. Trevor yielded nevertheless, not without an effort, to the fate into which she had been betrayed. She had that within her, a degree of sense and spirit, which moved her in her early marriage days to use the gentle influence she hoped in some degree to have obtained over her husband's affections ; to effect some change in the general system of affairs she saw daily growing up around her, as well as to assert and maintain her own gentle dignity and comparative independence as a woman and a wife.

Alas ! she knew not the nature of the being with whom she had to cope ; it was but as the

falcon-hunted dove, fluttering within the fowler's snare, or beneath the vulture's claw, the cords are but the tighter drawn—the grasp more crushingly extended, till the victim feeling his impotence to resist, resigns itself powerless to its fate. Mrs. Trevor struggled no more. All thought of influence was at an end, except indeed that which her gentle virtues, her submissive tears, like the droppings of water upon a stone, might in time be permitted to effect.

Her wounded affections withdrew into the still sanctuary of her own mind, whilst in patient meekness she performed her duties as a wife. This was all Mr. Trevor required. He had gained his point; he had bent her to his will. She superintended and accommodated herself to the close and grinding economy he exacted in his house. She sacrificed all extravagant tastes, all expensive inclinations, bestowed charity and kindness alone from the resources of her own scanty, grudgingly-accorded allowance. Even in her less responsible requirements she gave him full satisfaction.

Mrs. Trevor bore to her husband just three sons—healthy, promising boys—none of those

superfluous, money-frittering excrescences—daughters! These sons all were disposable, convertible to some aim or end. There was the heir—that necessary machine to keep the greedily-preserved fortune and property in future train; there was a second son to secure the good fat family living from escaping into extraneous hands, and there was yet another to place in the lucrative and distinguished banking-house, in which Mr. Trevor was a sleeping partner. Yes, in this she had done well and wisely, and the husband was in the end content. But in the first instance, even here, he was not entirely satisfied with his wife's conduct. Nature had rebelled against the young mother's affording nourishment to her eldest born. Other aid was required, and this unwarrantable and unnecessary infraction upon the rules and exactions of maternity, sank the parent considerably in her lord and master's valuation and esteem. The second time she proved more successful—oh, how fully successful, if to that success were to be attributed not only the pure health, the more refined vigour of body which distinguished the mother's own nursling above his eldest brother, the suckling of a farmer's

burly daughter ; but that nobler nature, those high-toned qualities of mind and disposition, which grew with his growth and strengthened with his years—and oh, how too successful if from that mother's breast he imbibed his own sad heritage of suffering and of wrong !

On the third, and last occasion, which presented itself, the face of affairs assumed a different aspect. Mr. Trevor, either because he grudged his wife as would not have been at all inconsistent with his character, the extreme pleasure she experienced in the former case, and the excessive fondness with which this child had naturally wound itself around its nursing mother's heart. Whether from these, or still more unworthy notices, this time Mr. Trevor, on some capricious arbitrary plea, objected to his wife indulging in the same natural enjoyment, himself selecting the individual, who was to supplant her in this office. The wife of a tenant on his estate, about to emigrate to Australia, but who preferred remaining behind for some years in service.

Mabel Marryott fulfilled her hired duties well by her patron's infant ; so well, that according to her master's orders, she was afterwards

retained, as general superintendant of the nursery establishment, though her influence did not long continue limited to that office; and it was Mabel Marryott, whose daily business it soon became, to attend upon the little Eugene in his morning visits to his father's study; where sometimes, for an hour together, upon table or floor, as accorded best with his age, or fancy, he sat and played the mimic miser, with his favourite toys—the shining heaps of glittering gold or silver, always produced on these occasions, to amuse and keep him quiet; whilst in that distant room above, where we have seen the unconscious Mary spend so happy an hour, sat the wife and mother, struggling with the inward anguish of an injured, wounded spirit, or straining the little Eustace to her heart, calling him, in deep, earnest accents of endearment, her darling—her own boy—her precious nursling; beseeching him never to forsake her, to stand by his own mother—to love, and to protect her, till the boy's dark, fervent eyes, would suffuse with tears, and he would promise, with the little full and throbbing heart beating against her breast, always to be “mamma's own boy,” and never to leave her even when he was

a man ; and the heir—he, in the meantime, had probably made his escape to the stable-yard, to the grooms and stable-boys, for whose society he, from his earliest days, shewed much inclination, to the danger both of his neck and his morals, by the lessons in horse-riding or loose talking he there received—tastes and propensities with which his mother found herself powerless to interfere. Mrs. Marryott did not object. Master Trevor was neither a manageable or engaging child ; these tastes and habits took him off her hands ; Mr. Trevor saw only that they made the boy bold and healthy. They were propensities and amusements which cost him nothing ; so he desired that he might not be pestered any more by the representations of his anxious mother ; she might make one milksop if she wished, but leave the other alone ; Marryott would see he came to no real harm.

The boy was to go to Eton when he was twelve. He might, his father continued, be allowed to take his own course till then ; and Mrs. Trevor, though not suffered to interfere in any other department, was expected to take upon herself the arduous office of instructress to this one, as well as to her other two boys,

who were also to be kept at home till they had attained the before-mentioned age.

Mr. Trevor had no idea of his wife's talents being put to no better purpose than the solace and amusement of her own lonely, joyless existence; and the poor lady was too willing to enter on a task, which promised a means of drawing her children towards her in closer intercourse than was otherwise permitted. Such was the cruel jealousy, which dared to prevent the mother from acquiring too great an influence and ascendancy over the children's affections.

Long, however, before the time assigned, Mrs. Trevor was forced to represent to the father her insufficiency and unfitness for the duty imposed upon her.

The thick-headed, mulish-tempered Henry, his heart and mind ever with his dogs and horses, very soon began to require some stronger hand and firmer will than she possessed to force him into any degree of application; whilst the two other boys, the one high-spirited and talented in the extreme—the younger taught to look upon his mother in little better light than that of a slighted and despised dependant

—became even earlier, above or beyond her strength and power for the work.

But in vain might she remonstrate.

“You are idle, you are idle,” was all the answer or relief she obtained.

So she began again, and persevered—much to the wear and tear of body and nerves. But that was nothing. It was an employment—and should have been an interest and amusement rather than an hardship.

And so the mother laboured on with all a mother’s patience and long-suffering, bearing rather than contending against the many difficulties and discouragements which beset the task.

One rich reward was its attendant—the satisfactory fruit which crowned her efforts, however comparatively weak and inefficient they might be, as concerned her noble son, Eustace; not but that pain and trouble of a certain kind were her portion, even here. But it was a pleasureable pain, how exceeded by the ample recompense it afforded.

What fervent gratitude—what deep, strong affection did every tear she shed, every sigh she breathed in his cause, fan into life, water into

vigour in that young pupil's breast! How was she adored, revered, upheld supreme at least in the heart of one being in the world.

Eustace Trevor, as those of generous and superior natures generally are found to be, was a child of naturally impetuous disposition and independent spirit. Though full of genius, and promise of bright things to come, it could not be but that he sometimes grieved his gentle teacher, and gave her patient spirit pain.

But ah, the contrite grief; the self-indignant sorrow of the child which ever followed on such occasions; how was he prostrate in body and spirit before the beloved being, whom he had so offended. How the elder brother dull, and unrefined in feeling, rather than unamiable at heart, would stare with stupid amazement at such animated demonstrations in the penitent; whilst the younger—what a glance of cold surprise from his dark eye—what a look almost of disdain in his young countenance, as he sat, and watched, and wondered to see such affection—such zeal displayed in the cause of one he was used to behold, so scorned, so slighted so dishonoured, by those who had gained ascendancy over his young mind.

It was worth while to love his father—to seek to please and propitiate him—or even Mabel Marryott. But *she*! what could she do? what influence, did *she* possess over her children, or any one else either for good or evil?

Yet the boy Eugene was by no means an unaffectionate or unengaging child, nor devoid of amiability of character; had it not been for the early influences which impressed, and moulded his mind and disposition.

His father and Mabel Marryott both loved him in their way; the former suffering him to win a greater ascendancy over his close shut heart, than that which any other individual ever attained. Nay, to him he even relaxed in some degree his strongest, and most guarded point of impregnability—his purse strings.

When his elder brothers as children, obtained their grudgingly acceded shillings and sixpences, the more valuable crown piece, or sometimes half-sovereign was bestowed upon the favoured Eugene—to be triumphantly produced at the neighbouring town, where he occasionally rode with his brother Eustace, for the gratifica-

tion of any taste or appetite, in which he might choose to indulge; whilst the other expended his scanty store on some trifling gift he thought might gratify, or please his much loved mother. Yes, this was the most galling of all poor Mrs. Trevor's catalogue of grievances—the unjust and cruel partiality exhibited by her husband in the treatment of these two younger boys; for the eldest, Henry, though neither favoured or in any way much regarded by his father, at any rate met with neither injustice or unkindness—inasmuch as neither his nature or propensities, rendered him worthy or desirous of any greater degree of privilege or advantage, than he obtained—and he was sent to Eton at thirteen, when all that was to be done for him was done, that was necessary and proper. But the second son, Eustace—whether it was the boy's disposition, so antagonistic in every respect to his father's; or that it was her own unfortunate attachment to this child, or that child's love for herself which drew upon his innocent head this unhappy distinction; whether it was this cruel jealousy on her husband's part, or the secret influence

on the same account, of her insidious enemy, Mabel Marryott. However it might be, a spirit and system, it might almost be termed persecution, was maintained by the father towards this son from his childhood upwards. He felt doubtless too the reflection, which the zealous love of the boy for his mother cast upon his own conduct in that respect. Never did Mr. Trevor forgive a proof of this spirit, shown forth by the young Eustace in the instance we are about to record.

CHAPTER XI.

Is there not
A reverence in the very name of "mother"
Could thrill the ruffian purpose?

SHIEL.

He is the second born of flesh
And is his mother's favourite.

BYRON.

It was Eugene's birthday. He had coaxed Marryott to give him a treat of cakes and fruit in the garden summer-house. His brothers were invited, and even his father honoured the party with his presence.

Marryott presided over the entertainment. Eustace had been out of the way, and did not arrive until the others were assembled. He made his appearance at the banquet all bright, animated expectation, having but just

heard of the unwonted indulgence provided him, and prepared to partake in it with full boyish enjoyment.

But at the threshold he paused. By one quick glance, his eye had taken in each individual of the collected group. A sudden thought seemed to press upon the wild beatings of his heart. A cloud overshadowed the quick brightness of his brow.

"Come along, Eustace!" cried the boy Eugene, "if you mean to come at all."

But no, he did not stir. There he stood, rooted to the spot, his changing countenance betokening the struggle of strong feeling passing through his breast, another glance—from which shot forth a gleam of noble fire—around, and then his dark, full eye fixed itself with calmer sternness upon his young brother's face.

"No, thank you, Eugene," he said firmly, "I cannot come. My mother she is all alone in the house. I must go to *her*," and instantly he turned, and

"Went away with a step strong and slow,
His arch'd lip press'd, and his clear eye undimmed,
As if it were a diamond, and his form
Borne proudly up, as if his heart breathed through."

On one occasion, Mrs. Trevor heard the voice of her husband raised in long and angry accents. She listened with trembling misgiving as to the object of his reprehension, but when to words sounds succeeded, plainly betokening bodily chastisement, she could no longer refrain, but hastened to the spot from whence they proceeded.

It was Mr. Trevor's study, and on opening the door and entering, she found indeed her beloved boy Eustace under the hands of his father undergoing severe and painful punishment ; Eugene standing by like a young Saul, witnessing the martyrdom of a Saint Stephen, holding his brother's coat over his arm, a little pale perhaps, but watching with a tolerably cold and steady eye the proceedings of the parental persecution.

The look and tone of sore distress with which the gentle intercessor supplicated for mercy, shamed even the unloving husband into compliance.

He released his victim, who turned aside with tearless eyes, but every vein of his noble brow swollen with suppressed anguish.

But every thought of his own suffering or

disgrace seemed soon to be forgotten in the pain and grief he saw upon his mother's countenance, as with trembling voice she made inquiry into the offence which had called down such unwonted severity upon the culprit.

"He is a squandering spendthrift," was the father's reply; "and you, Madam, with your fine ideas and lessons, have helped to make him so; but I will teach him better. He was at the same trick once before, and I warned him of the consequences. A long time will it be before he gets another shilling from me, to waste upon a set of rascally vagabonds lurking about the premises, seeking what they may devour."

"Mother!" said the boy firmly, "they were a party of poor mechanics, turned out of their homes and deprived of all means of getting their bread. One man carried his poor little girl, dying from starvation, in his arms; what better could I do?"

Another sharp blow from the father cut short the explanation, and Eustace was ordered to leave the room, not to approach his mother, or touch a morsel of food, save bread and water, for the remainder of the day.

The boy obeyed in silence, but with a bursting heart, and Mrs. Trevor remained to listen, in resigned sorrow, to the anathemas poured forth against her darling—of his evil and corrupt dispositions, and the fearful predictions, that she would live one day to see him turn out the disgrace and ruin of the family.

“Only see, Madam, in this one instance the difference between these two boys. Eugene, bring your money-box.”

The boy, with complacent alacrity, produced a small casket, and opening it with a key attached to a ribbon round his neck, exhibited indeed a shining store of silver pieces, slightly interspersed with gold.

“Eugene is indeed a rich boy,” the mother observed very gravely.

“Yes, and a good, and wise, and prudent boy, and he shall be richer still some of these days; I will see to that. Yes, *he* can—he may afford to be generous; he knows how to bestow his gifts in the right direction. Eugene, show your mother what I have allowed you to buy out of your savings for your attached and valued friend.”

The boy, in the same manner as before, un-

covered a parcel lying on the table, and thereby displayed a roll of rich and handsome silk.

"Is it not beautiful, mamma?" he exclaimed innocently; "it is for Marryott; this is her birthday you know."

Mrs. Trevor's lip quivered. She looked pale, and turned away her head.

When were *her* birthdays so remembered?

"May I take it to her, papa?"

"Yes, yes, take it away, boy!" said Mr. Trevor, rather impatiently; and Eugene, proudly shouldering his offering, marched off triumphantly with it to Marryott's apartments.

A silent pause ensued. It was broken by Mrs. Trevor, quietly suggesting the advisability of a more regular and impartial allowance being bestowed upon the two younger boys, remarking that she feared the present arrangement was likely to be prejudicial to the characters of both, perhaps to their future conduct through life.

The mother spoke more firmly, more courageously than usual. Perhaps the incident which had just been enacted, had a little hardened and strengthened her spirit for the encounter. But her words were of little avail.

"Not at all, not at all," was the angry

interruption. "Allow me, Madam, to act as I please on that point. I give what I please, and withhold what I please, as I see fit and proper; and I have found out pretty well before to-day, that whilst I could trust one boy with a whole bank of money, the other is not, nor ever will be, worthy to possess one shilling of his own. I shall, therefore, act accordingly, and beg you will not attempt to interfere upon the subject; it is my department, not yours."

Mrs. Trevor could only sigh, and was about to retire. But no. She must first undergo another ordeal.

The door opened, and Eugene re-appeared, attended by Marryott.

"She is so pleased, papa, and so obliged," cried the boy, "and is come to thank you."

Mrs. Trevor arose with gentle dignity.

Mabel Marryott had not been apprised of her mistress' presence in the library, but the expression of her well-disciplined countenance—that "face formed to conceal"—scarcely evinced this fact as she paused upon the threshold, and with the utmost composure and respect, apologised for her intrusion; but begged to be allowed to express her grateful thanks for the

beautiful present which her dear master Eugene had just brought to her. It was much too handsome for her, appealing with the greatest deference to Mrs. Trevor ; but she would gladly wear it for her dear boy's sake.

"Do—do so, Marryott, it is Eugene's present—quite his own," Mr. Trevor replied with some embarrassment of manner.

"Indeed, Sir?" with the utmost simplicity; "well, I must say, he is always a dear generous child," and she stooped and kissed the boy, who rather unwillingly submitted to his nurse's fondling. Mrs. Trevor knew that this was the same woman, who had so short a time ago betrayed her generous child Eustace, to the unjust anger of his father, and there was something in this present demonstration of affection towards this other, which went greatly against her feelings.

She rose—never with all her provocations, was her mild ladylike deportment laid aside, and said :

"Eugene, dear, open the door for me ; I am going up-stairs."

The boy, though unaccustomed to any such *exigant* demands on his respectful attention, from his mother, nor trained to yield them un-

asked, shook off Marryott's arm, still encircling his waist, and willingly obeyed, running to comply with the request. Mrs. Trevor left the room as Eustace had done not long before, in silence, and with a swelling heart, whilst Mrs. Marryott's glance after her retreating figure, seemed to ask what was the meaning of this undue assumption of importance in her unassuming mistress.

* * * * *

The same partial fate which attended the young Eustace under his father's roof, extended itself to his life at school. In the rather inferior establishment to which he, and his younger brother were sent—one very unworthy and inefficient to develop the genius and talent, inherent in the boy—qualities which nevertheless struggled forth, spite of all disadvantages, into life and power, too little appreciated by others—there the favour of the sycophant master, was lavished exclusively on the rich father's favourite, to the apparent detriment and depreciation of the other. The high and generous spirit of the boy, was reported as ill-disposed and unruly, and treated accordingly with severity, or more properly speaking, tyranny and injustice.

A crushing or hardening effect upon the mind and character, must have inevitably been the result of such a process, had it not been for the superior nature of the being upon whom it worked ; to say nothing of that counter charm which ever lay upon his heart, a talisman against the power of every evil influence—his mother's love. But there was one effect produced by the state of things we have endeavoured to show forth, which could not be averted. We mean the seed of future misery, thereby sown between the youthful brothers.

In early childhood there had subsisted between them an affection almost bordering upon enthusiasm, remarkable in children of their age ; in the younger how soon, like every other good and truthful inclination of his heart and character, contracted and undermined by the still more pernicious influence to which by his different circumstances he was exposed. It might have been supposed that were the invidious feelings of envy, or jealousy, to be engendered in either mind by the system of partiality to which they were subjected in such a lamentable degree, it would have been in that of the least favoured ; but jealousy belonged not to the noble nature of Eustace.

Sad surprise—indignant risings in his breast against the injustice of his father's conduct, were the consequence, but no invidious feeling against the rival object himself. That one indeed, he would ever have loved and cherished, borne with and forgiven, as in those young days, whilst any evidence of brotherly feeling was given in exchange. But no—it was the favoured one, as we often see to be the case—the rich and favoured one, who began to envy his poorer brother, even the scanty portion which fell to his share.

And of what was there in those early days that Eugene could envy Eustace?

What but that boon, which though influenced outwardly to despise—his inherent taste for the good and beautiful, caused him secretly to covet, above every other gift—the fervent love which he saw bestowed by his despised, but angelic mother, on the child, whose affection drew it so freely forth—love how ready to be poured, as largely on his own head, but for the barrier of slight, coldness, and constraint she saw so soon interposed between herself and that else equally beloved child.

Oh! the pain, to mark the glances of that

dark, clear eye grow cold and dim, when turned
upon her—the once open brow

“Cloud with mistrust, and the unfettered lip
Curled with the iciness of constant scorn.”

But all this belongs more properly to a later,
and, alas ! darker period of the lives of those it
is our task to trace, and to which we must
hasten forward ; that period, in which boyhood
merges into manhood, and the seed sown for
good or ill springs forth, and bears—some
thirty, some sixty, and some an hundred-fold.

CHAPTER XII.

Have I not had to wrestle with my lot ?
 Have I not suffered things to be forgiven ?
 Have I not had my brain sear'd, my heart riven ?

BYRON.

IT was Mr. Trevor's good pleasure to bestow the church living in his gift upon his second son. On the same principle, we suppose—as it was the fashion, at that period—more we trust than in the present time—for the least promising and least talented of a family to be devoted to the sacred service of the church—did the father, we conclude, in the present instance select for this purpose the son least esteemed and honoured in his eyes, without any regard to the inclinations of his own heart, or his fitness for that vocation.

Eustace Trevor was sent to College, on as small an allowance as could in decency be accorded, and commanded there to prepare himself for Holy Orders.

How can we describe the trials, the struggles, the discouragements which beset the path of one who, under more propitious circumstances, might have passed on to such high and distinguished grades of honour and distinction?

His noble character and conspicuous talents, drew down upon him the love, admiration, and honour of those around him; yet to some degree the galling hand which had laid heavy on his boyhood oppressed his powers even then.

Great and good as was the young man's nature,

"Temptation hath a music for all ears,
And mad ambition triumpheth to all,
And the ungovernable thought within
Will be in every bosom eloquent."

The very superiority of Eustace Trevor's nature, his high, and serious estimate of the holy nature of the profession which had been forced upon him, soon caused the youth to recoil with conscientious horror from em-

bracing it upon such terms. He laid his scruples before his father, who with contemptuous indignation told him he might then starve, or beg, for by no other means should he obtain from him a farthing of subsistence—and his mother, whilst she sympathized in his feelings on the subject, still encouraged and besought him to make himself worthy of the sacred vocation, and bring down those high thoughts and aspirations which rendered it incompatible with his desires.

This was the substance of her mild, soft pleadings in the anxious cause :

“ My son, oh leave the world alone !
Safe on the steps of Jesus’ throne
Be tranquil and be blest.”

Encouraged by this strong persuasion, Eustace Trevor promised for her dear sake to do all in his power to satisfy her solicitude, and reconcile his own conscience on the point.

Eugene in the meantime was given a place in the great banking establishment before alluded to, a position which only served to throw the young man in the way of all the

temptations and dissipations of a London life, and rather to overthrow those expectations of Mr. Trevor, as to the money saving propensities of his favourite.

In his fondness for money, he might indeed show himself a worthy son of his father, for to attain it by all attainable means soon became his actual object. Yet to whatever pitch this inclination might arrive in later years, in these his days of youthful folly, "to spend and not to hoard," was certainly his distinguishing propensity; thus affording his father plentiful opportunities for displaying to the full, the partial injustice of his conduct towards his younger children.

One of the most striking instances in this particular was exhibited a few years after the establishment of Eustace at College, when Eugene was about nineteen. The latter unexpectedly one summer evening arrived at Montrevor from London, in no very happy state of mind.

Gambling was unfortunately one of the pleasures, or more properly speaking passions, which assailed the young man most strongly in this early part of his career. He had just

lost a considerable sum of money at the late Derby ; and this was the first time that he found himself obliged to confess this delinquency to his father, and apply for the amount necessary for the payment of the debt of honour thus incurred.

He could scarcely flatter himself that Mr. Trevor's hitherto partial favour could avail him in a case of such unwonted enormity. Forfeiture of that favour, perhaps a refusal of his application ; anger, disgrace at home, ignominy, dishonour abroad, all stared him in the face. Eugene entered the house at night, and went straight to Mabel Marryott's apartment, where, scarcely noticing the eager and astounded greeting of his foster-mother, he threw himself upon a seat, and leaning his elbows upon the table, he buried his face in his hands, and remained plunged in moody silence.

In vain for some time Marryott questioned him, as to what had happened to occasion his sudden return, and the discomposure under which he appeared to labour. But at length, having shaken off the hand she so caressingly placed on his shoulder (for some years the

young man had begun to discourage any similar demonstrations from his quondam nurse), he called for some wine; and having drank off a bumper, he then came out with the abrupt communication, that he had lost a thousand pounds, and that she must manage to get it from his father.

Mrs. Marryott was astounded.

"Lost a thousand pounds!" Mr. Trevor to be informed of this, and coolly asked to supply it. The boy was mad to think of such a thing. No favouritism would indeed avail to cover such an enormity in his father's eyes. She, with all her confidence in the influence she possessed, would not risk the office of intercession in such an outrageous instance, at such a time too, when Mr. Trevor was overlooking the accounts of his brother Eustace, who had just returned from College, and into a fine state of mind she assured him his father was worked up by the employment. Then, in anticipation of the paternal indignation she prepared him to receive, Mrs. Marryott ventured to bestow upon her foster-son some severe strictures upon the imprudence of his conduct, all which Job's comfort the young

man was in no mood to receive with patient equanimity.

Starting from his seat, he rudely told her to hold her tongue, for if she did not choose to help him he must go to some one who would ; and rushing up stairs, he went straight to his mother's sitting-room. Mrs. Trevor was alone, seated near the open window, with her eyes fixed sadly on the church spire rising amidst the distant trees, and pointing with such solemn silence to that blessed home, for which the wounded spirit must have so often yearned.

"Eugene !" she exclaimed in surprise, as, turning her sorrowful countenance towards the opening door, she beheld her son ; and Eugene having slightly returned the pressure of her outstretched hand, threw himself down upon the nearest seat, in much the same state of moody dejection as he had previously done in the apartment of Marryott.

But there seemed something more soothing in the atmosphere of his present position—something in the subdued and holy calm of the maternal presence, which had never before impressed him in the like degree.

Perhaps it had been a relief to his jealous

spirit to find his mother thus alone, unaccompanied, as was usually the case when he was in the house, by the envied Eustace, to be the witness of his discomfiture, and an auditor of his misfortune. And when, perceiving that something was amiss, she approached, and, without inquiry, sat down silently by his side, he did not now shrink from the fair soft hand which, with almost timid tenderness, was placed in gentle sympathy on his arm, but burst forth at once in softened accents of appeal with the grievous fact.

“Mother, what am I to do? I have lost upon the Derby a thousand pounds; have it I must immediately. I cannot tell my father; some one must get it out of him. Marryott won’t—will you?”

The mother withdrew the hand which, emboldened by her young son’s unwonted show of confiding consideration, had ventured to begin to part the dark matted locks from his heated brow. Nor was this done from dismay at the chief purport of this desperate intelligence, but from the cold pang with which these concluding words struck upon her ear: “Marryott won’t—will you?”

It had not then been the impulse of his filial heart, as for a few brief minutes she had gladly hoped, to fly to his mother in his distress. He had gone to another first, and only come to her as a last resource—as often when a boy had been the case, when Marryott, for fear of his father's displeasure at the expense, had refused him some indulgence—some of those “good things” we have heard the man Eugene so feelingly deplore, and with which the mother had supplied him from her own too circumscribed resources.

Had not the present emergency been out of the question to her limited powers, how willingly would she in the same manner have relieved her son of his pressing anxiety.

As it was, the momentary pang of bitterness allayed, without giving way to any irritating manifestation of her feelings, with regard to his astounding communication, she only expressed her sorrow at his misfortune and perplexity; and refused not to take upon herself the office he demanded of her.

“Alas, Eugene! you know the extent of the influence I possess,” she sadly observed. “I can but break to your father what you have

related, and trust to his general indulgence towards you, rather than to any regard he may be inclined to pay to entreaties of mine in your behalf."

"Exactly; that is all I want, mother; tell him that I will work hard at that d—d bank for the next year—that I will make it up to him in some way—anything in the world; but if he does not let me have it, I must blow my brains out—that's all."

And the mother, sadly sighing over the ruinous course—ruinous as regarded his soul's welfare—in which her son had so early embarked—and she, without any power to influence or to restrain—left the room.

Mrs. Trevor entered the library with no willing step. She knew well how she should find her husband occupied, and the disagreeable nature of her mission was less repugnant to her feelings than the pain which would most probably be in store for her in her other son's behalf.

And here indeed she did find her Eustace undergoing a more torturing mental ordeal than that of the physical chastisement to which she had on a former occasion seen him exposed in

that same apartment ; his noble, generous spirit goaded almost beyond the power of endurance, as compelled to sit there before his father, and submit to the most close, exact, and grinding examination of every detail and minutiae of his last year's expenses, a process accompanied, as was every item of the amount, with the most bitter and angry comments on his so-called profligacy and extravagance—the galling and degrading nature of which ordeal every young man, blameless and well-principled as he may be, will be able fully to appreciate.

The mother cast an involuntary glance of tender concern upon the victim, and then approached her husband.

“ Well, Madam, are you too come to assist me in this delightful business ? ”

“ No, Mr. Trevor,” in a trembling voice. “ I have come to speak to you upon another subject—about Eugene.”

“ Eugene ! what in the world have you got to say about him ? ”

“ He has returned home in much distress ; he has been unfortunate, and requires your assistance, though at the same time is fearful of your displeasure.”

"The devil he is! well, I am a happy individual. Have I not enough on my hands already," with a vindictive glance at Eustace, "without being bored in this fresh quarter? I suppose he wants his allowance advanced; but be so good as to tell him, Madam, that until I have finished the delectable business in which I am engaged, he must please to wait. What the deuce did he come running down here for, wasting his time and my money. A letter, I should think, would have answered his purpose; really, one would suppose I was made of millions."

"But, Mr. Trevor, I am sorry to say that Eugene's case is of greater, more immediate importance than you imagine. Eugene, I grieve to tell you, has lost a very considerable sum of money at Epsom, and requires an immediate remittance for payment (as it is called) of his debt of honour."

Mr. Trevor changed colour, and an involuntary oath escaped his lips. But something—perhaps it was the glance he saw exchanged between the mother and son—caused him to restrain any further ebullition of the feeling with which this revelation inwardly inspired him.

For he fancied—how unjustly may be imagined—that something of triumphant exultation was expressed in that glance, that it was now the father's favourite on whom was about to descend his displeasure—perhaps the present forfeiture of his former favour. This was most fortunate for Eugene. It turned the course of his passion into another channel.

“And what, allow me to ask,” he proceeded with forced composure, “may be the amount of this unfortunate involvement?”

Mrs. Trevor, in a low tone, named the sum.

Its extent probably exceeded Mr. Trevor's expectation, and the expression of his countenance plainly indicated the struggle of contending feelings within his breast.

He took two or three strides about the room, then ordered Eugene to be sent to him.

“Nay, Madam, pray do not you trouble yourself,” as Mrs. Trevor was preparing to leave the room, too willing to escape from the scene of whatever nature which was to follow; and he rang the bell, and desired Eugene to be summoned.

In a few minutes, during which no one spoke—Mrs. Trevor sitting pale and patient, Eustace

walking to the window with a look of weary disgust upon his countenance, whilst Mr. Trevor's dark eye glanced alternately the one from the other, with the wary suspicious glare of an angry animal—Eugene entered, prepared for the worst, with a dogged indifference of countenance and threw himself upon a chair behind his father.

“ Well, Sir, and what is this I hear of you?” Mr. Trevor commenced. “ Lost a thousand pounds! a pretty story truly; and want me to give you the money. Really one would think you were heir to twenty thousand a-year, instead of a younger son,” with a significant glance towards the window, “ totally and entirely dependent on my bounty.”

There was nothing very encouraging in the letter of this exordium. Something, however, in the manner in which it was spoken, seemed to give hope and courage to the culprit; for shaking off his sullen moodiness, he sprang from his seat, and approaching his father, began to pour into his ear, in earnest humble strains, a string of protestations, representations, and excuses, relating to the subject of his loss—on the true Spartan principle, accusing the failure

rather than the committal of the deed—showing how it had been, by the most unforeseen turn of luck, that he had not won *thousands*, instead of losing *one*; the good fortune which had attended him, on each preceding occasion of the kind ; finally declaring his determination to do better for the future, or at any rate so manage, that he would blow his brains out rather than again trouble his father.

“Well, well, Sir, this all sounds very plausible, indeed,” was Mr. Trevor’s reply, having listened with becoming gravity and consideration to the defence ; “but I would advise you to give up this losing trade of gambling you have commenced. You will find it, let me tell you, far less profitable in the end than sticking to your bank. In the meantime, to extricate you from your present dilemma, and enable you to turn over a new leaf for the future—this also being in your case the first trouble you have given me—I will write you a cheque for what you require ; but remember, this is the last time you must expect from me anything of the sort. Your brother there will tell you how I have plenty to do with one younger son’s worthless extravagance—”

“Mr. Trevor, you are cruelly unjust,” interposed the mother’s trembling voice, indignant tears swelling to her eyelids. “You know that one half of what you bestow so freely upon Eugene would amply cover all that Eustace owes—”

“Mrs. Trevor, may I request your silence on the subject?” thundered her husband. “Have I not often told you, that I desire no interference between myself and the affairs of my sons. Supposing I do act with the cruel injustice you so flatteringly ascribe to me, what then? have I not a right to do what I will with my own?”

And, suiting the action to the words, his hand trembling with agitation, he hastened to achieve—that to him almost incredible thing—to write a cheque and present it to his youngest son for a thousand pounds, with a certain feeling, or at any rate the appearance, of un murmuring alacrity.

So does one bad feeling at the time being, govern even our worst of passions.

Eugene on his part did not, as may well be supposed, trouble himself to analyse the merits of his father’s unexpected generosity

He was really overcome with gratitude at the ready manner in which his anxiety and trouble were thus alleviated. He thanked his father with earnest emotion, and repeated protestations of never again requiring such beneficence at his hands.

Mr. Trevor waved him away. He had done the deed—he had shown forth his own perfect independence of will and power—satisfied his own bad feelings towards the object of his unnatural aversion, and mortified—as seemed his constant aim—the partial feelings, as he deemed them of his gentle wife towards her second son. And now the ruling passion began again to struggle into power.

The remembrance that he had just signed away a thousand pounds of his close-kept hoards, without more demur than in former times he might have bestowed a half-crown piece upon the boy, began to stir within his breast no very great feeling of satisfaction.

Eugene knew his father too well to risk any further provocation of the feelings he could pretty plainly divine, and hastened to beat a triumphant retreat, purposing to leave Montrevor that same night.

In the exuberance of his feelings, he would probably, at least by a glance, have thanked his mother for the service she had so auspiciously rendered him ; but Mrs. Trevor's looks were sorrowfully averted, and he passed her by, not caring to irritate his father by any more manifest token of attention. He did, however, stop to shake hands with Eustace as he passed the window near which he stood—the first greeting exchanged between the brothers, who had not met before for several months.

Eustace Trevor returned his brother's greeting with no lack of kindly warmth. He had stood mute and motionless as a statue throughout the late trying scene which had been enacted. No sign of dark passion—of envious, hateful feeling could have been read upon that countenance, pale as marble, and beautiful in its nobly-suppressed emotion. Only once—that time when his mother had raised her meek voice in his defence, had an expression of strong feeling—a mixture of disdain, indignation, and grateful affection—broke forth over his countenance, and his dark, full eyes turned upon that much-loved champion with a glance not to be described, whilst his lips moved as if he were about to entreat

her not to distress herself for his sake, when his father's angry interruption had more effectually supplied any deprecation on his part to that effect.

But now, having returned, as we have said, his brother's greeting in a manner which showed no particle of invidious feeling to have been excited against the object of such unjust and unmerited favouritism ; when, too, his mother had softly and sadly left the room, without daring to cast another look upon the beloved object for whom her heart was bleeding ; he came forth and stood before his father, with a firm and composed mien and countenance.

“ Father !” he said.

Mr. Trevor was looking over some drawer in his *escritoire*, with no very happy expression of countenance.

“ Well, Sir ?” glancing upwards, speaking in the most sharp, irritated tone and manner, “ what in the name of —— do you want now ? I must request you to pester me no more to-night, we will return to the pleasant task of settling the rest of your debts to-morrow.”

“ No, father—that cannot be. I am no

longer a child—a boy; and it is not in the nature of man to bear, even from a father, injustice—degradation, such as that to which I am subjected. I ask you then, that this very night, on this very spot, for once, and for ever, to let my account be settled between us; and never I solemnly swear, here or hereafter shall you be troubled by me or my concerns. What I ask is, that you will give me down a sum of money, just sufficient to pay my expenses out of this country, and let me work for my bread by the sweat of my brow, like others whom I know, in one of the distant colonies; for this I say will be preferable, far preferable, to what you now make me endure—far more accordant with my feelings of right and honour, than shackled, degraded in every point, to be goaded, drawn into a profession for which, besides the original disinclination I felt to embrace it, I have been rendered still more unfit by the treatment I have received. Viewing the office as I do, in a light far too sacred to be entered upon by one, in the spirit and temper of mind to which you have reduced me.”

“ Well, Sir, well; I admire your pious

principles ; do as you please ; give up this living. Many a better man than you, no doubt, will be glad to have it. Go off to Botany Bay, if you will—but beg, borrow, or steal your way out as you like. I must decline advancing you a farthing towards that laudable design ; all the money you ever get out of me, goes to making you a parson ; choose that, or beggary ; for do not suppose that you will be coming over me a second prodigal son. Go, riot as you will, but not from me will ever come the wherewithals. Eat the husks, if you please ; but as for the ring, and the fatted calf, and all that—”

“ Sir !” interrupted the young man, by a strong effort suppressing the resentment these taunting words fired in his breast from breaking through the limits of filial respect. “ Far be it from me, to expect such things at your hands. No, truly, the very husks of the fields *would* be far sweeter to my taste than the begrudged bread eaten in my father’s house. And, refused as I am the just and reasonable demand I have made to-night—determined as you are to show the cruelly childish dependence

to which you have reduced me, willingly would I embrace the other alternative, and by the sweat of my brow, unaided by you, gain my daily subsistence, were it not for the one consideration which draws me back, and renders me powerless to resist—my mother.”

“Come, come, Sir; no more of this,” interrupted Mr. Trevor impatiently, wincing consciously—as he generally did from any allusion of the kind—at this observation of the zealous son, as if he feared the reflection on his own conduct which it implied. “No doubt, as you have now found that I am not to be threatened out of another thousand pounds to-night, you have plenty of considerations in reserve to reconcile your dainty stomach to the loaves and fishes so cruelly forced upon you, in preference to the husks to which it so nobly aspired. There—you had better go and learn to practise, first, the duty, and obedience, and all that you will have to preach to us bye and bye. Let me hear,” in a tone of taunting irony, “what shall be your first text,”

“Fathers, provoke not your children to anger!” was the reply which thrilled in low, deep

accents from the young man's voice through the dusky apartment. But the servant for whom Mr. Trevor had some minutes before rang impatiently, entering the next moment with lights, the impression, whatever might have been its nature, which it made upon the hearer, was dissipated, and a conclusion put to one of those dark, painful interviews such as it is our unpleasing task to record, which within that long, low library were enacted. Alas! more dark and dreadful still are those which have to follow.

Poor Mary Seaham! how would your gentle spirit have quailed with shuddering dread, if a vision of what had there been witnessed had dimly passed before your sight—those calm, sweet eyes there fixed with such trustful and admiring confidence, upon that venerable old man—have shrunk with horror and aversion, could “the light of other days” but have revealed in all its naked hideousness, the spirit—which now chained and incapacitated in its decrepitude and weakness—had once worked with such hateful power within that aged form; but what even this, to the knowledge of other things which it might also have revealed—the

close and active part which he—who then sat by her side, as an angel of light to her infatuated eyes—had taken in some of these deeds of darkness.

CHAPTER XIII.

In its train
Follow all things unholy—love of gold—

The phantom comes and lays upon his lids
A spell that murders sleep, and in his ear
Whispers a deathless word, and on his brain
Breathes a fierce thirst no water will allay—
He is its slave henceforth!

N. P. WILLIS.

It is often to be found, that men of strongest and least regulated passions, calculating, cautious, as may be the nature of their general character, are the most easily rendered subservient to any influence or weakness to which they in the first instance, have capriciously chosen to lay themselves open.

Thus it was with Mr. Trevor. His unjust partiality towards his youngest son turned against him, so far, that the latter gradually gained an ascendancy over his father's mind,

for we cannot exactly call it his affections, which no one, not even the favourite Marryott, had ever been known to attain in so extended a measure, and effect. To Eugene Trevor's credit, it may at least be said, that he was not one, so far as his outward conduct and demeanour were concerned, to abuse such a position; on the contrary, he was rather disposed to conciliate the continuance of it, by every seeming mark of gratitude, and duty, never, however, neglecting in any direct, or indirect way to turn to advantage the propitious circumstances of his case.

This habit had long engendered that peculiar respectfulness of manner and demeanour, which we had occasion to remark so undeviatingly maintained by the son, towards the miserly parent.

But perhaps a bond of union had then been established between the father and son, of a more subtle and secret character, than any were aware; the consciousness on the parent's part, of having pardoned and covered in the son, more than he had any right ever to have so covered or forgiven; the son subdued in some measure to grateful subjection towards that

parent, from the consciousness of what had by him been concealed, and overlooked; a bond of union, the more strengthened and annealed as years wore on, and showed the harmony of character and propensity, however differently they might as yet be shown forth, which subsisted between them.

Alas! when evil, not good cements the union of man with man—when hand joins hand, for deeds or purposes of darkness—especially when by such unholy links are seen connected, parent with child—child with parent! However, all this might be—there was certainly a suspicious cloak over one era of Eugene Trevor's early history, under which no member of his family save his father ever penetrated.

We allude to a period, two years perhaps after the event, which has lately been brought forward, when he was suddenly removed from the business in which he had for a period held a kind of sinacure office; and ever afterwards was tacitly suffered by his father to live at large, either at home or abroad, following no other profession or pursuit, but those pleasures

and practices, to which he was but too strongly addicted.

There is then good reason to suppose that the liberality of his father on the occasion we have quoted, did not put a stop to further losses and embarrassments of the same nature on Eugene's part; and one dark instance will prove at least, to what extremity he was once driven, at the same time as it exemplified the little confidence he was disposed as yet to place, in the kindness and long suffering of a parent, whose character and disposition he had too much acute insight and observation not to be perfectly able to appreciate. He knew that in his father's breast existed a passion wherein neither reason, nor benevolence, nor natural affection, nor any other faculty had in other cases the least influence—whilst in his own breast could he have analyzed its propensities with equal exactness, he might have read the love, and aspiring after the attainment of the same unrighteous mammoth, as deep, and vehement, in its development, though as yet subservient in a degree, to other feelings—the slave—not as yet the master spirit of

other appetites and propensities. And alas! in the instance we are about to record—how strongly is it proved that a great activity of this passion, if the moral qualities of the mind be low—if there exist no honest or honourable means, or a desire to pursue those means by which it can be gratified—dishonesty, dishonour, every dark and crooked way and means, may be the fearful consequences.

* * * *

There came another evening when Eugene Trevor returned clandestinely to Montrevor, without, as on former occasions, seeking to make his arrival known to any member of the establishment. But Mr. Trevor was not long in being apprized by Marryott, that his youngest son had some hours since entered the house, and had gone straight to his bed-room, from which he had not since made his appearance, and she wished to know whether she had not better go and see what was the matter?

Perhaps Mr. Trevor had his misgivings as to something being in the wind in that quarter, which it were as well that he might see to in *propria persona*, therefore, he told Marryott

that he would go up stairs himself, and find out what the boy was about.

He accordingly proceeded to that distant part of the mansion, which contained the sordid rooms, allotted from their boyhood, to the sons of the family, and entered the one appropriated to Eugene's use.

Mr. Trevor's stealthy entrance enabled him to stand some minutes without notice, for the young man was seated with his back to the door, leaning over a table, seemingly in the anxious examination of a small bundle of papers he held in his hand, and on which the keen eye of the observer fixed itself with suspicious surprize, for they were evidently bank notes.

Suddenly the father made a cautious movement forward—something had caught his eye. It was one of these same papers, which the draught from the open window had probably, unperceived by the owner, wafted from the table to the ground, just behind the young man's chair.

The father stooped ; and having clutched it in his grasping hand, curiously scanned his prize ; yes, it was to all appearance one of

those precious things, after which his soul lusted—a monied note—a note for £20 on the London Bank in which he had so great concern.

But how was this? His hand trembled as he held it for stricter examination further from his eyes. Perhaps his heart misgave him from the first. How had the boy become possessed of all this money?

Ah! a new light flashed upon him, and he became deadly pale.

That well practised vision, that sharp witted perception was not to be deceived. The astounding, stunning truth miraculously flashed upon his senses, that the paper he held within his grasp was no true genuine bank-note on the firm of Maynard, Trevor and Co., but that *it was forged*.

One moment after, and Eugene Trevor felt a sharp nervous grasp laid upon his arm. He started violently, and the terrified ashy countenance he turned towards his father, would at once have convicted him in the eye of the beholder of any capital offence of which he might have been suspected.

“Wretched boy, what have you done?”

gasped the father, as with one hand maintaining his hold on the culprit's arm, with the other he held the accusing note before his shrinking eye, glaring at the same time fearfully upon him. "This—this—" in accents tremulous between rage and horror, "I know, I feel convinced, is *forged*!"

The son sat pale and trembling, but attempted not a word of explanation or denial.

"And the others—the same?"

They were passively yielded for inspection. All—all—alike!

"Do you wished to be hanged, Sir?" almost shrieked the father.

"I must have money—those might have passed for such."

"Might?—yes, and you might, I say, be hanged."

"Well, if I were hanged, what then? Life's not worth having without money," was the dark and moody rejoinder.

"And why should you ever be in want of money?" Mr. Trevor replied in a low, trembling voice.

"Why? why—when I see how you serve Eustace."

"Eustace!" in a tone of impatient scorn ;
"what's Eustace to do with you?"

"Or if I could be content to live the life that Harry leads," was the sullen continuation, "I might perhaps do very well; but as I have in some degree tastes and inclinations beyond those of a groom or a jockey, I must have money somehow or another, for accidental emergencies like the present. There was nothing left for me but this," pointing to the notes, "or to blow my brains out, to which alternative I suppose I have now arrived."

"Tut, tut—nonsense!" replied the agitated father; "why did you not come to me?"

"You?—why, after that thousand pounds you gave me, I could not expect you'd supply me with all I want now."

"And who—who," continued Mr. Trevor, still livid with horror and dismay at the dreadful risk his son had run, rather than at the crime he had perpetuated; "who, in the name of Heaven, was your abettor in this preposterous scheme?"

Eugene Trevor, after a little hesitation, named his accomplice—of course, an *attaché* of the Bank in question—a young man of

low birth and principles, with whom Eugene Trevor had formed this dreadful confederacy, and who was subsequently removed from the bank by the connivance of Mr. Trevor, about the same time, as his young patron was, as we have before mentioned, mysteriously taken from the business.

"None of these notes have yet been circulated," the father inquired in terrified anxiety.

"No; not yet. I brought them down here, and Wilson was to follow, as you gave me leave to ask him; and then I was to consider over with him the best way of proceeding."

Mr. Trevor mused for a moment; then gathering up the notes in his long, thin fingers, carefully, nay, even delicately, as if he could not away with some sentiment of tender respect even for that which only bore the semblance of his heart's idol; he bade his son, in a low hoarse tone, to get up, and follow him down stairs.

Eugene mechanically obeyed; and his father stealthily preceded him back to his library, the door of which they having both entered, he carefully closed and bolted.

Eugene sank upon a chair, with blanched

cheeks, and trembling in every limb. He had not tasted food all day ; but, more than this, the act of moving from one room to the other had probably roused his mental powers, and his not yet quite depraved or hardened heart became more sensible to the horrors of the risk, and the enormity of the crime from which he had been providentially rescued.

His father, seeing the condition his son was in, produced a small flask he kept near him for his private use in cases of emergency (he never, generally speaking, partook of wine or spirits), and poured him out a sparing quantity.

The son looked at the glass contemptuously, swallowed its contents ; then seized the bottle his father had incautiously left within his reach, emptied it of at least half of the remainder, and drank it clean off.

Mr. Trevor, in the meantime, had turned away, to enter upon the business in hand. Holding the dangerous papers still clutched fearfully in his grasp, he looked around to determine how most securely to dispose of them.

It would have been easy to have committed

them at once to the flames, if any such means of destruction had been provided ; and thus every memento of his son's guilt might have perished for ever ; but though a chilly April evening, no fire at such an advanced period was suffered to burn upon the miser's cheerless hearth. So he looked from that hopeless quarter for some other resource ; and going to his *ecritoire*, unlocked it, and in one of its most secret recesses deposited those deeds of intended wrong, destined to afford long, long after their very existence was forgotten, a striking example of the fact, that sin, however at the time covered or concealed, seldom fails to bear forth some fruit of woe, be it to ourselves or others, in future years.

Mr. Trevor then proceeded to open another drawer, and glancing towards his son, carefully selected some bank-notes therefrom, brought them to Eugene, and thrust them hastily into his hand, as if he feared the impulse might have evaporated ere the act was accomplished. They were the exact number of those he had counted of the forged notes.

The young man looked on them at first with a bewildered and uncertain gaze ; then,

overcome probably by the reaction of feeling, burst forth into a paroxysm of tears, with which he covered his father's hand, as he gave vent to a torrent of thanks and deprecations against such undeserved generosity.

The aged man—for even then, though scarce past sixty, Mr. Trevor from appearance might have been so denominated—that old, old heart having long imparted the influence of years to his character and demeanour, he seemed by this fervent recognition of his unjust—indeed, under the circumstances of the case—iniquitous indulgence, to be spurred on to an effusion of warmth towards his favourite, almost monio-maniacal in its extent. Again he seized his keys, and, one after another, threw open wide chest after chest, drawer after drawer of his spacious treasures; showing, with layers of notes to a great amount, heaps of shining gold—the gathered hoards of years; with which, besides the enormous deposits with which the bank of Maynard and Co. was enriched, this “exceeding rich man” kept to feast his eyes and delight his heart with their sensible and tangible presence.

“There boy—there,” he exclaimed, observing

with a kind of exulting gratification the impression this display made upon the young man's countenance—how his eye kindled, and his breath came short and quick, as if with the covetous delight which found such sympathy in his own breast, “is not that worth living for, think ye Well, well, never forge again, nor waste and want, as you have lately begun to do ; but wait, and watch, and learn to do like me, and who knows but some day or another”

He paused, and glanced significantly from his coffers to his son, from his son to his coffers.

“Harry will be a lucky fellow,” murmured Eugene, averting his countenance, over which, at those words, a brightening gleam had passed.

“Pooh, that fool !”

“That fool, Sir, is your eldest son for all that,” laughed the other.

“And if he is, what's that ? it's my own, all that Besides,” lowering his voice, “mark me, he'll break his neck some of these days.”

“Not he, Harry's too good a rider for that ; and you know a fool is sure to live for ever ; but even if he died, there's Eustace.”

"Eustace—curse him!" was the fatherly ejaculation.

Even the calculating brother now looked a little shocked, and when just at that moment there came a gentle knock at the door, both started, like guilty creatures as they were. But the old man glancing at his coffers with nervous alarm, hurriedly bade his son to wait, shutting them up, and making them fast with hurried trepidation ere the inopportune intruder was admitted. It proved to be only Marryott, who presented herself with a smooth and unsuspecting countenance, to ask whether Mr. Eugene would not come and partake of the supper she had provided for him in her own room. And Eugene, though at first about to profess himself not hungry, on second thoughts, and a glance from his father, changed his mind, shook hands affectionately with his foster-mother, and consented to avail himself of her considerate attentions.

A change had come over the young man's dream; a new vista opened before his eyes; Satan had showed him the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; he must bow the knee and worship.

CHAPTER XIV.

Blest order, which in power dost so excel,

* * * * *

Fain would I draw nigh,

Fain put thee on ; exchanging my lay sword

For that of th' Holy Word.

HERBERT.

ABOUT a year from this time an uncle of Mrs. Trevor's died, leaving twenty thousand pounds to his niece's second son, Eustace, his god-son ; and the persecuted young man thus found himself, by this unexpected behest, placed in a position which rendered him to a degree independent of the tyranny and bondage to which he had been hitherto subjected by his father, and at liberty, if so had been his pleasure, to relinquish the profession which had in such an arbitrary manner been forced upon him. But it was not thus to be. Very different now

was the nature of the case. He stood a free man—free to choose or to reject the path of life before him, and the spirit which had struggled so fiercely in the ignoble chains which bound it to that course, now disenthralled, turned as naturally as the eagle to the sun, to that high and holy service for which he had been prepared.

The proud and restless spirit, soothed and tranquillized, yielded itself as a little child to the scarcely-breathed wishes of his mother, that the struggles he had so long and nobly endured in bringing down his rebellious thoughts and contrary inclinations—the hard studies to which he had devoted himself to fit him according to his own high standard for the important vocation, might not be thrown away ; but that before she left this world of sin and sorrow, she might have the happiness of seeing her beloved son wedded to that profession, which in her eyes offered the only fold of security and protection from the snares and temptations which beset the path of manhood—"the bosom of the Church."

Eustace was fully persuaded that his father would now withdraw the living he had before so pertinaciously awarded him ; for he plainly

perceived the increasing enmity the bestowal of his uncle's little fortune, had raised against him in the breast of his unnatural parent, an act purposely, no doubt, made by the testator, to secure it from the well-known cupidity of his niece's husband. But what if this were the case? The forfeiture of this benefice would but the more fully satisfy his own mind, as to the disinterestedness of the change affected in his feelings with respect to that profession.

Therefore from this period did Eustace Trevor set himself with heart and soul more fully to prepare for the sacred office, and having shone with increased brilliancy in the path of learning, covered with honours and distinctions, stood ready for the ceremony of ordination.

But this event was retarded; first, by the severe attack of brain-fever, the result probably of the course of hard and long-sustained study, which nearly brought him to the brink of the grave, and prostrated his strength for many an after day; and by the time he had sufficiently recovered, another event had occurred, the nature of which seemed likely to effect a most important change in the aspect of his future career.

Mr. Trevor's words, spoken in cruel levity, with reference to his eldest son, became verified in a manner not often found preceded in the course of the world's history. The body of the unfortunate Henry Trevor was brought home one morning to his father's house, it having been found lying on the road, where, on returning home the night before in a state of intoxication—a vice to which he had been unhappily addicted—he had been thrown from his horse, and, as it appeared, killed upon the spot.

And Eustace Trevor stood in that brother's place—eldest son, and heir to all that would have been his!

It is not often that such instances are afforded us in the order of God's dealings; instances which, to our blind sight, cannot but appear wisely and providentially appointed.

We would fain cut down the barren tree, that the good and fruitful may flourish in its room. But the husbandman wills it not. We would fain root out the tares: but he orders that they should flourish on. The evil weeds grow apace; whilst too often the flower withers, and fades ere it be yet noon.

But here men said all was right. Poor Henry Trevor! removed from a sphere in which he could never have played but so ignoble a part; making room for one of whom none could desire better to fill his place, as heir and future representative of a house and family of such wealth and consideration as that of Trevor, and so noble and brilliant a successor to its present miserly head.

Few in any way acquainted with Eustace's superiority of character, hesitated to look upon the death of the first-born but as a source of congratulation rather than of condolence to the new heir, and to posterity. So do men err in their calculations of good and evil!

Little did they know the wild heritage of woe this seeming good did bring about! Seldom has the death of an unlamented eldest son proved so direful in its consequences.

The catastrophe in question, of course interrupted, for a while, the intended ordination of Eustace Trevor. It was naturally supposed that no further thought would be entertained of his entering the Church, either by himself or family. Indeed, we will not say but that

his change of circumstances altered also, in some degree, his own ideas upon the subject.

New prospects, new duties, new spheres of action for his transcendant talents, seemed to open before his view. Even Mrs. Trevor might have seemed tacitly to bend to the new position of circumstances. It was, however, difficult for the son to gain any insight into the wishes of his father upon the subject; for some time after his brother's death he was denied all access to that parent's presence: Mr. Trevor's vindictive feeling against his second son not suffering him to bear the sight of him in the new position he now was placed.

No one, indeed, save Eugene and Marryott, from this time were suffered often to approach him. The former, from the period recorded in the last chapter, spent much of his time at Montrevor; his favour and influence with his father increasing day by day. At this treatment, Eustace could be neither much astonished or grieved. For his mother's sake alone did he ever make Montrevor his abode, and her failing health, which had received a

urther shock from the violent end of her unfortunate son, drew him more anxiously than ever to her side.

He laid his future destiny in her hands. If she still desired him to embrace the office of priesthood, no change of fortune should induce him further to demur.

And no change of fortune *could* alter the mother's heart's desire on that score ; but she knew that worldly consideration spoke otherwise. Was it for her to gainsay the wisdom of the world, perhaps the dictates of her son's own heart ?

She bade him further pause and consider the question ere he took the indissoluble step, which would bind him so firmly to the service of his God. She advised him to go and try the world, to look upon its pride, its ambition, and its pleasure. He went. Courtèd, flattered, and admired, all these allurements beckoned him away. The world smiled upon the eldest son, and not only the world ; he in whose heart of hearts hatred and envy were darkly smouldering against one whom fortune had at once so unexpectedly favoured, and raised above himself

—he also in that smiling world spoke him fair, and walked with him as friend—and this was his brother.

How was it then that Eustace Trevor finally returned to his original intention? Was his eye even then opened to see the hollowness of all that thus surrounded him, or that returning thence to his mother's side, he beheld her fading form, her anxious eye, and determined in his heart that her fainting spirit should be rejoiced—her last days cheered by the accomplishment of her soul's earnest desire.

Was it in bitterness of soul at his father's cruel hatred? The still more cruel suspicion that dawned upon his perception, in spite of all outward seeming, that the heart of his brother was turned against him more darkly still; and that he felt it to be absolutely necessary to secure himself a definite occupation and object in life, ere the time came when the only light of his paternal home would be quenched with his mother's life, and he become a voluntary exile from its portals? Be it as it may, Eustace Trevor, without giving notice of his intentions to any of his family, went to Oxford, and was finally ordained, having by

consent of the bishop, in consideration of the long preparation and many accidental delays which had postponed the event—his long-tested readiness and ability for the important vocation—been excused the year's probation which must generally intervene, and was admitted on the close coming occasion to the office of priesthood.

“Dread searcher of the hearts,
Thou who didst seal
Thy servant's choice, oh help him in his parts,
Else helpless found, to turn and teach Thy love.”

CHAPTER XV.

The first dark day of nothingness,
The last of danger and distress.

BYRON.

THUS signed and sealed, a devoted soldier of the church of God, "fearless yet trembling," Eustace Trevor went forth, and proceeded to his home—for home he must always term the spot which contained his mother.

In his mind was a conflict of many and full fraught feelings. There was the consciousness of the great and responsible charge he had that day taken, and the new colouring it must henceforth cast upon his future existence—accompanied by a calm and holy joy (as at the same time, that peace and good-will to all men warmed his heart, yes even to his enemies) the world seemed to fade from his estimation, and the kingdom of Heaven and its righteousness, to

be the only one on which his soul was fixed.

But perhaps a less high-toned, but no less pure and holy emotion was the one which, unknown to himself, most strongly predominated over the rest—the idea of his mother. The glad surprise he had prepared for her suffering spirit, the joy he knew would fill those sorrow-dimmed eyes, when she learnt the consummation of her heart's desire on his behalf!

It would be difficult to conceive aright the depth and strength of the affection which, fed by "love and grief, and indignation," had grown with the growth, and strengthened with the strength of Eustace Trevor towards his mother; therefore its expression to some might appear exaggeration, but such it was, and the nearer he now approached the demesne of Montrevor, the more was his mind filled with her pure and holy image, and all the happiness he hoped for, both present and future, seemed to concentrate in that one point.

The possibility of losing her, seemed to become a thing he could not allow himself to think was possible. It was but sorrow and

mental suffering which had affected her precious health. Happiness should again restore it; he would have a home to offer her. Power or principle could not bind her to the one, where wrongs, dishonour, and grief, had been so long her portion. He would bear her away to more healthful air, and with his love and devotion bind up her broken heart, and heal her bruised spirit. He had enough to provide for her in comfort, if not in luxury; and what luxury—what scarcely comfort, had she ever tasted in her husband's penurious abode?

If a thought of the day when those princely possessions he entered would be his, crossed his mind, the idea was but fraught with painful regret; scarcely daring, as he did, to extend his dreams so far as to contemplate the possibility of *her* being alive when that day came, to profit by the circumstance—to find all the grief, and wrong, and slight, and dishonour which had marked her existence in her husband's wealthy house, exchanged for the honour, power and dominion—to say nothing of the peace and prosperity—which should gild her latter days, as mistress of her son's rich inheritance.

Yet at the same time it may be truly said no dark thoughts, no covetous desire which might have sprung too naturally from this train of ideas in any other breast, was hereby suggested. No, he felt too great a calm, a peace and contentment, in the present aspect of his life, as contrasted with the struggles and trials which had been its early portion, not to have contemplated such a *bouleversement* as that to which we allude with any feeling save that of horror and distaste. No—he had seen and proved enough of the hateful sin of covetousness, for any such feeling to have gained admittance in his breast ; nay, not indeed to have fled from its very idea, as from a serpent.

“They that will be rich fall into a temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which draw men into destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of evil, which, when some coveted after, they have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, man of God, flee from these things and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.”

Thus, in a frame and state of mind which it

would have been far from the thoughts of man to conceive as the presager of misery, dark and horrible, Eustace Trevor approached his father's house.

It was night, and the mansion seemed wrapped in more than its customary gloom and darkness. Every window was closed and shuttered—all save one, and from that the only ray of light visible on its whole extent glittered through the open casement.

It was enough—the light came from his mother's chamber. The star of his home shone forth, as it had ever done, to cheer and welcome his approach. He did not seek admittance at the front door. That had never been the privilege of himself or brothers during their boyhood, or their custom by choice in later years.

There was a more private entrance, through which, after having left their horse or other vehicle at the stables, the young Trevors could enter or issue at their pleasure—safe from the *espionage* or uncertain welcome of their father. To this Eustace had now recourse. He tried it, and finding the doors beyond his expectations unsecured, passed through, making his way by a back staircase to his mother's apartments,

without encountering a domestic or any person on his route.

The house was still and silent as the grave. He entered the boudoir. There was no lamp or candle burning there, but the clear light reflected from the adjoining chamber, of which the door was ajar, seemed to indicate that his mother had retired for the night.

Softly he stepped across the floor to make known to her his arrival. He knew she was expecting him about this time, therefore no fear of startling her too much by his sudden appearance presented itself to his mind—no fear indeed ! He listened. All was still—only a slight breeze through the window, (he vaguely wondered that it was open at this hour though the night indeed was close and still), faintly rustled the canopy of the bed and flared the waxen tapers standing on the table. If his mother were there, she undoubtedly slept.

He glanced around the room before advancing further to ascertain the fact, and was struck by the cold and unnatural order pervading the apartment. It was the sign which first chilled his blood and impressed him with a vague but horrible dread. Yet he stood no longer ; with

a firm though somewhat quickened step he approached, laid his hand upon the drapery, which was slightly drawn round the head of the bed, and beheld his mother.

She slept indeed—how fast, how well, one look alone sufficed to reveal! But Eustace's eye turned not from the gaze which had first fixed itself upon that marble brow.

“He gazed—how long we gaze in spite of pain,
And know, but dare not own, we gaze in vain.
In life itself she was so still and fair,
That death with gentler aspect withered there.”

The long faded beauty of her youth seemed to have returned to Mrs. Trevor's countenance, as there in “the rapture of repose,” she lay.

Yet the son's eye became glazed in its intensity, as if the sight was one of horror and fearfulness, whilst the hue of the cold sleeper's cheek, was life, and health, and beauty, compared with that which settled on his face.

A female servant of the establishment came and found him still standing thus. The woman's startled alarm at first was great. To behold that tall statue-like figure in the chamber she had left, deserted by all living. But any

weak demonstration of her fear was awed into reason and collectiveness, by the recognition of her dead mistress' son, who at length, as she stood transfixed in her first paroxysm of terror to the spot, turned his face towards her, revealing a countenance on which no passionate emotion, no strong grief, nothing but a stern, fearful composure, was visible, and demanded in a low, hollow voice :

“When did she die?”

“This morning at nine o'clock,” the woman answered, weeping.

“It was enough—she died ; what reck'd it how ?”

Eustace waved his hand in sign for her to depart. She obeyed immediately, closing the door instinctively behind her ; seeming at once to feel and understand that he who had most right to command, within that chamber, had arrived.

And all through the lonely watches of that night ; lock and bolt from within, secured, shut out from all intrusion, the agonized communion of the living with the peaceful sorrowless dead. The living in his agony which no tongue could tell ; the dead, whose life might have been

called one long painful sigh—one sympathetic groan, lying there, serene, senseless, smiling on his pain. But too great had been the shock of the deep waters which now overwhelmed his soul, for Eustace Trevor to consider, and bless God that it was so. He that but an hour before had come on his way rejoicing—his spirit lifted up as it were on eagles' wings, “from this dim spot which men call earth,” to heaven, now was as a crushed worm—a broken reed,—stricken to the ground in hopeless, powerless despair!

“Why hast thou smitten me, and there is no healing for me? I looked for peace and there is no good; for the time of healing, and behold trouble!”

Such is man in his best estate; his highest strength is weakness—altogether vanity. Let the Almighty call forth his storm to break upon his head; let him wither his gourd—his spirit faints, and is ready to die.

CHAPTER XVI.

Oh wretch ! without a tear, without a thought,
Save joy above the ruin thou hast wrought.

* * * * *

Look on thy earthly victims and despair.

BYRON.

WHEN the morning arrived, some one came knocking for admittance at the door of the chamber of death. The knock was several times repeated before it gained any answer or attention ; but finally a slow and heavy tread was heard traversing the apartment ; the bolt was feebly drawn, the door opened, and Eustace Trevor stood face to face with Mabel Marryott.

Prepared as she was for this meeting, and in some degree for its being one of no pleasing nature, the woman could not but recoil before the wan and haggard countenance which presented itself to her view.

Her stony eye shrunk—her bloodless heart quailed at first sight of those signs of mighty grief which one night's agony had imprinted there. But perhaps it was not so much his appearance as the glance, Eustace, still holding the door in his hand, fixed upon her, which thus affected her ; and he, favoured by this movement on her part, was about, without the utterance of a word, again to close the door in her face, when quickly recovering from her momentary weakness she prevented the action, by stepping quickly forward, and attempted to pass him by. But no ; firmly he remained within the doorway, effectually frustrating any such endeavour. Mabel Marryott looked at him with an air of affected surprise, her cool, unabashed demeanour perfectly restored.

“Mr. Eustace,” she said, and there was an insolent tinge of patronising pity in her tone ; “will you allow me, Sir ?”

“No ; I will not,” was the reply which burst forth in accents, which, if there were aught of human in her mould, must have shook her very soul to its centre ; “you are not wanted here ; you have done enough—you have helped to

kill her ; what can you desire more ? Begone ! —tempt me not to call down the curse of Heaven upon”

“Eustace—Eustace—this is folly ; this is madness !” said a voice behind him ; and the fearful words were stayed on Eustace’s lips, when he looked up, and beheld his brother. Eugene Trevor, looking very pale and ill himself, came forward, and with a glance at Marryott took his brother’s arm, and led him back through the chamber of death into the boudoir beyond, closing the door behind them.

“Good heavens ! Eustace, how ill you look ! You must not give way in that manner—it is weak, it is unmanly. This has been a blow to us all ; but you know it was not altogether unexpected. Her health has long been failing.”

But his brother did not heed him. He had lain his head down upon a table near the seat on which he sunk. Those cold, inadequate words did not touch his deep fathomless grief. But still, the sight and presence of one whom, she at least had loved, seemed to have some effect in soothing the passionate excitement of misery into which the sight of her she had

every reason to abhor, had worked him. He forgot even at the time to think how ill that love had been requited, and scalding tears,

“The very weakness of the brain,
Which still confessed without relieving pain,”

were trickling from his burning eye-balls, when again he raised his face, and turned it towards his brother.

“Eugene, who was with her?” he asked, while at the same time he murmured: “Not that woman?”

“No—I think not; it was so sudden at the last, that I believe, not even her maid knew of it till she came into her room in the morning. The doctor says it was paralysis of the heart.”

“Yes—yes, I see; deserted, neglected, even in the hour of death!”

“I saw her the night before, before going to bed,” rejoined the other, without noticing this interruption. “She seemed pretty well then, but did not notice me much—she only asked for you;” and there was something of sullen bitterness in the tone of voice in which these words were uttered.

His listener groaned.

"And why was I not sent for—*why*?" he repeated with agonized emphasis. "Oh, need I ask that question?"

"I told you, that to the last she was not considered in danger," continued the other with some impatience; "of course, there could have been no motive."

"No motive; no not more than there ever has been, for all that has been done to wither her heart and shorten her days—not more than there has ever been for the course of cruel, wanton persecution, which would fain, I believe, have crushed the very life blood out of my heart also. But that—that is nothing now; it is the thought of her alone which tortures my soul to madness. To think of all she was made to endure, for my sake and her own—that placid martyred saint; and then no effort made to bring me to her side, to soothe her dying pangs, as I alone could do; her last glance seeking for her son in vain; her eyes closed perhaps by her murderess . . . Eugene, has *he* dared to look upon her?"

"Who! my father?"

"Yes ; *your* father."

"I really do not know whether he has been here, or not, since"

"He could not—he dare not ; only a wretch like her could venture to enter there—to look upon that angel face, and not see utter despair and condemnation breathed forth from each cold feature upon her destroyer."

"Eustace this is strong language ; grief has weakened and excited your brain ; you want rest and refreshment."

"Rest and refreshment ? All the rest I can take is watching by her side, guarding her from any desecrating approach ; all refreshment, that which her cold, calm presence can afford. Strong language did you call it, Eugene ? Can your mother's son think any language too strong to express his hatred—abhorrence—against her mighty wrongs ? You cannot be in league with those who have destroyed her ?"

"I never interfered in those matters," Eugene murmured coldly, but with downcast looks. "It does no good, and is no business of ours, and if you had taken my advice, Eustace, you would have done the same. It would have

been the better for you. It is this sort of thing which exasperates my father against you."

Oh the look of mingled scorn, surprise, and sorrowful reproach, which Eugene Trevor, on lifting up his eyes, saw turned upon him. They shrunk again abashed before its power, and ere he dared again to lift them, he heard the slow heavy footsteps of his brother returning to the chamber of death.

Eugene did not follow there, but rising, went down stairs the other way straight to his father's library. Marryott was there, having doubtless been reporting to her master the unfavourable reception she had received from his eldest son.

Mr. Trevor sat in his dressing-gown cowering over the embers of a scanty fire. He looked feeble and haggard, and altogether might have been taken for many years beyond his real age. It could not be, we know, that grief had thus affected him ; but certainly from this period the old enchanter's wand seemed more and more to have been wrested from his hold, some blight to have fallen upon that cruel and covetous man ; something which bowed his spirit into

the impotence, almost dotage of premature old age; converting the tyrant into the slave—the man of strong passions into the tool of the passions of others—in all respects, indeed, save that which touched in any degree upon the mainspring of his being—the darling lust—which coiled like a serpent round his heart-strings; nothing but the hand of death could tear away his covetousness. How was this? Could it be that the words spoken in the bitterness of his son's agonized spirit, had thus been brought to bear upon him, that he *had* dared to look upon his dead wife's angel's face, and that the sight had cursed him.

“Lo! the spell now works around thee,
And the clankless chain has bound thee,
O'er thy heart and brain together
Hath the word been passed, now wither.”

He turned round on his son's entrance with a look of nervous dread.

“Oh, it is you, Eugene! Marryott has been telling me what is going on up stairs.”

“Pshaw!” the young man exclaimed, as he threw himself down on a chair, “one must not mind him just now, poor fellow, he is quite distracted.”

"I should say so, indeed," sneered the woman significantly.

"But he will not come here, I hope," continued Mr. Trevor, anxiously. "I desire that he is not allowed to come near me. I cannot, I will not see him!"

"No fear of that, Sir," answered the son coldly; "he is not very likely to trouble *you* with his presence."

"Well, well, that's all right; let him rave as much as he likes out of my sight. And now give me a drop of brandy, Marryott, and stir up the fire gently, only just gently. It's very cold."

And the victim of conscience cowered and shivered over the scanty flame thus excited.

"Eugene, stay!" he continued, "don't you go; I don't like to be left, and there's so much business to be talked over, such trouble and expense." And the miser set about to calculate grudgingly the cost of his wife's funeral.

CHAPTER XVII.

Oh, lie not down, poor mourner,
On the cold earth in despair ;
Why give the grave thy homage ?
Does the spirit moulder there ?
Cling to the Cross, thou lone one,
For it hath power to save.
If the Christian's hope forsake thee,
There's no hope beyond the grave.

HAYNES BAYLEY.

If it be terrible to look upon the face of
the beloved dead in the first hours of dissolu-
tion—

“ Before decay's effacing finger
Hath swept the cheek where beauty lingers,”

—what must it be when hour after hour, like
the worm in the bud, the tyrant's power steals
on its insidious way, and we stand and gaze
our last, and see and feel it *must* be so !

Yet through all this, from which strong man so often shrinks, leaving to woman's exhaustless fidelity the sacred care and mournful duty to the departed, did Eustace Trevor—"Love mastering agony"—maintain his watch, never allowing himself to be persuaded to quit the precincts of that chamber, till that dreadful moment which was to cover from his eyes all that in this world was precious to his heart—till a day more dreadful still should arrive to force it to a close. Night followed day, and morning chased away the shadows of darkness; but day and night were both alike to the dimmed eyes—the stunned senses of the mourner. He never slept, and but sufficient of the food placed for him in the neighbouring room, as barely might preserve existence, ever passed his lips. He saw no one, but occasionally his brother, and an inferior domestic; no other dared approach him. Thus far he had triumphed.

For the rest, stunned and enfeebled, it was to him but as a dark bewildered dream, wherein he played his part; nor knew whether friend or foe were standing by his side, if those who loved, or those who hated him, were mingling in the solemn rite. The darkness of the sepulchre

seemed to have engulfed every sense or feeling of his soul.

He was taken home from the church almost in a state of insensibility, from which it seems that he awoke only too soon to consciousness and woe. Late in the evening, at dark, he was heard by some of the awed domestics seeking the deserted apartment of their mistress, and the following morning was not to be found within the house.

This was reported, and after some search the miserable young man was discovered, wet with the dews of heaven, stretched upon the turf which enclosed the family mausoleum, which had been open to receive the remains of his mother, and where he had probably lain all night.

He was carried back to his chamber, and placed under medical care, his brother showing much anxious solicitude on his behalf. The doctor, however, the common attendant on the family, pronounced his malady to be merely the effect of long fasting, watching and mental distress, and which it only required proper measures to allay; whilst for the better assurance of these measures being carried out, the worthy practitioner placed his patient under

the peculiar care and superintendence of his great ally, Mrs. Marryott, whose skill and prudence he held in most subservient and sycophantish esteem. And with most seeming assiduity, Mrs. Marryott entered upon the duties thus imposed.

If anything were likely to fan into flame the fever, already raging in the veins of the unhappy Eustace it would be, as is easily to be supposed, this most repugnant infliction he was powerless to resist. In vain he protested, as far as his feeble strength would allow him, against the repugnant imposition of such odious services upon him, entreating the assistance of his brother in his release, repulsing the detested woman's attentions, and refusing to touch the food or medicines offered by her hand.

His brother soothed or reasoned. The doctor told him he must not be agitated—felt his pulse, shook his head. Still that Marryott's hateful face, with its serpent smile, hung over him, uttering smooth words in oily accents in his shrinking ear, or creeping noiselessly about the room, whilst his fascinated eye fain would follow loathingly. No wonder, then, maddened and excited, that the fever

raged more intensely, till, mounting higher and higher, his very brain seemed on fire ; every image, loved or hated, became distorted and indistinct to his mind ; till, finally, he lay prostrate, raving, struggling, delirious, beneath the power of that fearful malady, which had attacked him once before—a brain fever !

* * * *

It was a cold, stormy November night. The father and son sat together close beside the library fire, after dinner ; the latter musing absently over a newspaper he held before him, the former deep in the examination of an old leather pocket-book, where accounts and memorandums concerning money matters were noted down.

The door opened ; both looked sharply round : it was Marryott. She put her head in at the door, and begged Mr. Eugene to come and speak to her. Eugene turned pale, started up, and hastened to obey the summons. Mr. Trevor looked after him, put his note-book carefully into his pocket, picked up, and appeared to peruse the newspaper his son had thrown down ; but ever and anon, at every sound

that met his ear, his small dark eye might be seen peering eagerly towards the door.

"Well, well," turning eagerly towards Eugene, as he entered, looking still paler than when he left the room, but taking his seat as before, without speaking a word; "well, well, what's the matter? Where have you been?"

"With Marryott, talking to her. Panton has just come."

"Well, well—how is he?—worse?"

"Why, yes—I cannot say there is much improvement; but here's Marryott," as the door again opened; "she can tell you more about him and Panton's opinion."

Marryott entered, and stationed herself beside Mr. Trevor's chair, keeping her eyes fixed upon Eugene, as he sat leaning his elbows on his knees, and looking nervously down upon the ground.

"Well, well, Marryott, is he very bad? What does Panton think of him now?"

"He thinks very badly of him, indeed, Mr. Trevor," was her answer, in a solemn, mysterious voice.

"Really, really; Does he think that he will die?"

The woman cleared her throat.

"No, not quite that, though some might think it even worse."

She paused, and tried to catch Eugene's pertinaciously averted eye.

"Go on, go on. What, in the name of Heaven, is it then? Is he mad?"

"It is shocking to see him, Sir," Marryott hastened to rejoin, as if not sorry to have been spared the direct utterance of this communication; "and Mr. Panton has great fears whether his reason is not to an alarming degree affected. He cannot leave him; his violence becomes frightfully increased. Mr. Eugene saw how he was just now. If this continues, some measures must be taken. It is very dangerous to those about him."

She paused.

"Eh! Eugene, Eugene! This won't do, Eugene! What is to be done?" exclaimed the old man, in sudden panic, as he looked up. "He can't come here—can he? Dangerous! Why, he must not stay here then. I can't keep a madman in the house. Put him on a straight-waistcoat, and take him to the asylum

till he is better. I won't have him here, I tell you," cried the tender father.

"Hush, Sir, pray!—this is going too far," said Eugene, rising, and looking very grave and shocked. "I hope nothing so very extreme as this will be necessary, though indeed at present my brother is in a very fearful state. Panton has just sent for his assistant, as I should wish to keep the servants out of the way as much as possible; it would be making the dreadful affair too public."

"Well, well, what does that matter? It must come out some time or another. Did I not always say he was mad?" and a horrid gleam of something like exultation passed over the old man's countenance; "did he not always from a boy play the madman?"

Eugene listened with attentive consideration to his father's words, then looking up, met the significant glance of Marryott fixed upon him.

He turned away, and stood thoughtfully gazing into the fire. A pause of some length succeeded. Mr. Trevor had sat for some time musing, or rather calculating also, whilst Marryott stood watching with cold interest and

curiosity, the progress of a train of thought, of which her insinuations had kindled the first spark.

At length Eugene felt his arm touched. His father had made his way close up to his side.

"I say Eugene," and he whispered—but not so low that the third person should not overhear—some words in his ear.

His unhappy listener shrank as if the serpent's breath had in reality fanned his cheek. But he only shrank—he did not flee; and those "evil thoughts" from whence stand ready to pour forth like a flood, that fearful category of crime the gospel enumerates—were working within his breast, waiting but that same breath to breathe them forth into life and action.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A light broke in upon my brain ;
It ceased, and then it came again ;
And then by dull degrees came back
My senses to their wonted track.

BYRON.

It created no little consternation amongst the establishment of Montrevor, when it was delicately set about, amongst them, that Mr. Eustace Trevor, that noble, fine, generous-hearted young gentleman was *mad* ! Some, said, no wonder, coming home as he did, to find his mother, whom he loved so well, dead. Others told how, indeed, they had been near his room, and heard his ravings. One woman could testify of what she had seen of his strange grief exhibited in the chamber of death. Some few shook their heads mysteriously, but preserved discreet—though significant silence.

Vague reports got abroad, of course to this

same effect. Neighbours called to inquire. Mr. Trevor and his youngest son were not visible; but the cautious answers given at the door concerning the health of Eustace, served but to confirm the fearful suspicions now let loose.

Some few of the suffering young man's particular friends, amongst them young de Burgh of Silverton, made efforts to visit him in person, but this was declared to be so perfectly impracticable, that every endeavour of the sort was obliged to be relinquished; and at length it became pretty generally known that Eustace Trevor was removed from Montrevor, though it was not exactly ascertained where, and under what circumstances.

Eugene Trevor still kept himself shut up, inaccessible to every visitor, and even the servants were not a set disposed to be very communicative concerning the family affairs; indeed, immediately after Mrs. Trevor's death, although at no time had it been on a very extensive scale, a great reduction had been made in the establishment—it was compressed into the smallest possible compass for the exigencies of the large house.

All the domestics perhaps knew on the subject

was, that on a certain day, about a fortnight after Mrs. Eustace had been taken so very ill, Mr. Panton had brought, besides his assistant, another medical gentleman to the house. One of the Trevor carriages had been brought round, and Mr. Eustace was carried down stairs and conveyed away therein by the two doctors; his state of mind—as Mrs. Marryott reported—having arrived at a pitch which rendered it absolutely necessary that he should be placed under more close and immediate medical treatment.

As for Mr. Eugene, it seemed that he took his brother's condition greatly to heart. They never saw a gentleman look so ill. He scarcely touched a morsel of food, nor left the house to breathe the fresh air, but sat shut up in the library with the old gentleman; which must, they all thought, be very bad for him, both in mind and body—worse even than going off to London and racketting there, as they heard was his wont, though he did manage to keep it so snug and make himself such a favourite with his father. They wondered indeed how he managed with the old gentleman. They well knew how poor Mr. Eustace had been treated,

and should always think Mr. Trevor had helped to drive him mad ; but it was only like the proverb which says that “one man may steal a horse out of the field, whilst another may not as much as look over the hedge.”

* * * *

There is a pretty looking country-house about five miles distant from Montrevor, of which travellers as they pass generally ask the name, and are astonished when they hear its nature and appropriation ; so little, excepting perhaps the wall surrounding the premises, is there, in its exterior, as seen from the road, calculated to give the beholder an idea of its belonging to to any such class of institution as it really does. The interior too, on a stranger's first entrance, would not be likely to enlighten him. There are pretty drawing-rooms below, looking upon lawns and gardens, in which well-dressed people are seen to sit or walk ; and who give one little idea, by their carriage, behaviour, or even sometimes by their conversation, what has brought them there, and under which dreadful malady they are supposed to be labouring.

They seem to be treated in the kindest-

manner, and entertained and accommodated as in every way would be accordant with the immense sum which has gained for them the privilege of an entrance into this asylum of wealthy woe; for woe—yes, one of those worst of woes flesh is heir to—lies concealed beneath the glittering surface of appearances such as we are describing. And few would wish to pierce, even if allowed, farther into “the secrets of that prison-house,” lest sounds or sights which freeze the blood and harrow the soul might be listened to and revealed.

In a remote chamber of this mansion, between whose close grated windows the light of day but feebly straggled through blinds which debarred all outward view, Eustace Trevor had opened his eyes, and for the first time for many a day felt his brain cool, his mind clear, his vision disentangled from those false and disturbed images which hitherto had so tormented it, and reduced him an unconscious unresisting prey into the hand of the enemy. The crisis had passed—a deep but healthy sleep had succeeded. “The wild fever had swept away like an angry red cloud, and the refreshing summer rain began to fall upon the parched earth.”

But where and under what circumstances did this change find him ?

He had no assured remembrance of what had been. It only seemed to him at first that he had awoke out of a long, disturbed and painful slumber, of which confused dreams and horrid visions had composed the greater portion. He felt that he had been ill, and was feeble beyond description—too feeble at first to turn his eyes around—to raise his hands, upon which, clasped together on his breast, there seemed to lay, as upon his other limbs, some dead and oppressive weight.

He closed his eyes—the light, faint as it was, pained his long unconscious sight—and yielded himself again to that passive state of immovability to which he seemed reduced.

He lay for some time in this manner, memory and consciousness working their way by dull degrees within his soul. There was a profound stillness reigning round him, which induced the drowsiness of exhaustion, and he was relapsing into a half wakeful dose, when the rumbling of carriage-wheels broke faintly on the silence ; and soon after, a confused movement in the house more effectually, but still vaguely aroused his

attention. Then followed the hushed sound of human voices ; and one, raised above all others, in a terrible, but, as it were, quickly stifled shriek, caused him fearfully to start up in a sitting posture upon the bed.

He heard no other sound but that of a door being closed and fastened heavily, and, as it seemed, at no great distance from his own. Yet at the same moment, as by an instinctive sympathy with the ideas suggested in his mind, he tried to move his arms once more. Still they resisted every freedom of action. He struggled—he looked—he felt what a cold, leaden power it was, that thus constrained them, and strength seemed to return as fiercely. The unfortunate Eustace struggled to tear his wrists asunder. But no—more than the strength of a stronger man than he was needed to tear away those bonds ; for it was under no mere physical weakness, but bonds of iron, against which he had to contend, and his efforts served but to gall and bruise the limbs they encircled.

Eustace gazed around him. His eyes fixed upon the grated window, and a look of indescribable horror stole over that fine but emaciated countenance. He tried to put his feet to the

ground, and found them too strongly bound together ; but still he managed to move them from the bed upon the floor, and thus he sat, and again gazed round his prison walls.

Suddenly a man appeared by his side. The captive—for such he might be called—met the firm, peculiar regard this person fixed upon him, with the full, clear glance of his powerful dark eyes ; then looking down at the chains which bound him, said in a tone of earnest, but composed inquiry :

“ Good heavens ! do you mean to say that all this has been necessary ? Where am I ? Where is Mr. Panton ? Can I speak to him ? ”

“ Mr. Panton is not in attendance at present upon you ; but there is another gentleman, who will visit you at the appointed time. He is now engaged.”

“ Oh, very well ; but at least be so good as to relieve me from these skackles. I am perfectly sane now, you see, at any rate ; and weak enough, God knows ! to be perfectly harmless,” he added, as sinking back upon the pillows, he faintly offered his hands for the required release.

“ When Dr. Miller arrives, Sir,” replied the man, “ I have no doubt your wishes will be

obeyed ; but I cannot take upon myself to do anything of the kind without his authority. In less than an hour he will be here. Till then, Sir," with decision, turning the bed-clothes over the patient, "be so good as to lie as quiet as possible, and take this light nourishment I have brought you."

"No, no, Sir! Till Dr. Miller arrives, I consent—because I have no power to do otherwise—to lie here chained like a maniac, but not a drop of nourishment do I take till I am at liberty to receive it in my own hands. To have it sent down my throat that way, I cannot allow ; so attempt it on your peril. You see as well as possible that I am not *mad* now, if I have ever been so, which I very much doubt. I have had a brain fever I imagine. I had one once before in my life ; but this last may have been more violent in its effects, and at its height I suppose I was incarcerated as a lunatic here. You see, Sir, I have a pretty clear idea of the true state of the case, so take care what you do. And now be so good as to let this Dr. Miller be sent to me with as little delay as possible."

The keeper, for such he was, did not attempt

any further parley. He only said soothingly that he should be obeyed, watched his noble-looking charge turn and resettle himself as conveniently as he could, with an air of disdainful pride, upon his pallet-couch, and departed to report concerning him.

In about an hour Dr. Miller arrived. Eustace fixed his eyes calmly and firmly upon him as he stood by his bedside, looking gravely and anxiously into his patient's face. But when the medical man proceeded in the same way to feel his pulse, Eustace said, yielding with a wan smile his fettered wrists :

" I think, Doctor, you will be able to manage that better without these cuffs — ornaments which I can, if you please, dispense with at your leisure."

But the doctor with silent deliberation performed his office ; then relaxing his hold, and fixing his eyes again earnestly on his patient, said after another silent pause :

" Yes, Sir, you are better—certainly better ; and a week or two of quiet I hope may perfectly restore you. Jefferies, you are wanted."

And in obedience to his sign, the assistant, who reappeared at the moment, proceeded to

undo the fastenings of both legs and arms; and whilst so doing, the doctor and his factotum significantly looked at each other, as on removing the clumsy apparatus intended as handcuffs, the fearfully lacerated and wounded state of poor Eustace Trevor's wrists became visible.

"These are, indeed, awkward customers," whispered the man.

"Most unnecessary!" was the low-toned reply.

The fact was, that the ignorant, time-serving village doctor—a particular ally of Marryott's,—had taken upon himself thus to torture the insensible man, knowing perfectly that the greater semblance of insanity he could substantiate in his patient, the more he should gain favour in the sight of Marryott and her employers.

Eagerly the imprisoned one sat up, and watched the progress of this operation, as if like an enchained eagle awaiting his release to spread his wings and take its sunward flight. But at the same moment as the bonds relaxed their hold, a sudden faintness came over him, and sinking back again upon his pillow, he gasped an entreaty for water.

It was given to him, with other restoratives/

The doctor forbade him to speak, gave further orders to the assistant, and left the room. And that day, and the next, and throughout the week, Eustace was treated as any other man recovering from a dangerous fever might have been ; and day after day, as, gradually he felt his strength returning, was he the more content to submit calmly, and patiently, to the discipline to which he was subjected—the perfect quiet imposed upon him, feeling as he did, that thus the sooner would he be able to exact that explanation as to his present position, and his release therefrom, which he so earnestly desired.

We will not attempt to imagine the thoughts and feelings which must have worked within the soul of the sick man, as he lay there, within that grated chamber.

“Fearfulness and trembling have taken hold upon me, and a horrible dread has overwhelmed me.”

The very idea of finding himself in such a place, was enough of itself to affect the strongest mind with revolting feelings. But with that idea, the dark doubt, and uncertainty as to the circumstances attendant on his position—whether the cause had really justified the dreadful mea-

asures which had been employed ; or if—equally revolting idea ! — the unnatural persecution which had haunted him from his birth, had taken this last dark means of wreaking itself on its victim ; if so, to what extent might it not be carried ? And at the best, had not enough already been done to fix the brand of madness for ever on his name—

“ Blighting his life in best of his career.”

We need not say, how agonizing thoughts of his late mother mingled with this sterner woe, how he seemed to float alone on a stormy sea of trouble, that star of light which once alone had illumined his darkness, now withdrawn to shine upon a higher, purer sphere, till in moments of despair he was tempted, poor, unfortunate young man ! to implore of Heaven that those deep black waters might engulf him for ever in their depth—that he might die ! for “ what now was his life good unto him ? ”

CHAPTER XIX.

Feel I not wrath with those who placed me here,
Who have debased me in the minds of men,
Debarring me the usage of my own,
Blighting my life in best of its career,
Branding my thoughts as things to spurn and fear.

BYRON.

A WEEK passed thus, and at the close, Eustace was not only permitted to leave his bed, but was removed during the day to a lower room, opening upon an enclosed court, into which, though still feeble, he was permitted to stroll at his pleasure, undisturbed by the sight or presence of any of the wretched inmates of the establishment. Here his proud form at length one day confronted the doctor; and as he drew near, to inquire after his patient, Eustace thus accosted him :

“ Having so far recovered, Doctor, I suppose

you will now be so good as to satisfy my mind by answering a few questions I am naturally anxious to put to you. First of all, how long may I have remained in that house before I became conscious of being chained up like a wild beast in his den?"

"My dear Sir, it is our practice never to allow our patients to agitate or excite themselves by any discussion upon the subject of their late illnesses; but I may tell you so far, that you came under my charge here the night before the day from which I may date the period of your convalescence."

"And in what state was I conveyed here? I now seem to have some slight recollection of feeling myself borne along in a carriage; but it is all confused like the rest."

"No doubt, Sir; but your question I must beg to decline answering: it is one of those which are forbidden."

"And by whose authority was I committed to this place, may I be permitted to inquire *that*?"

The doctor hesitated, but looking on his patient, there was something in his countenance and demeanour which seemed to exert its due

weight on one—the secret of whose profession was influence over others, and a thorough knowledge of the workings of the countenances of those with whom they have to deal.

“By the proper authorities in such cases, Sir—the certificates of two medical practitioners and your near relation.”

“My father, I conclude?”

“No, Sir; the party who stood forward on this occasion, was your brother.”

“My brother!”

Those words were repeated as if with them a weight of lead had fallen on the listener’s heart, and stunned it.

Eustace Trevor stood transfixed for a moment, in silent thought; then turning from the doctor’s inquisitive gaze, took two or three turns along the grass, with folded arms, and head sunk low upon his bosom.

At last he paused, and stood once more before the doctor, who still remained steadfastly regarding him.

“I suppose, at any rate, that now, Sir, there can be no reason for my remaining any longer under your charge?”

"I hope, indeed, Mr. Trevor, that there may be but a very little time necessary."

"*Necessary!* No, I should think not. To-night, Sir, it is my wish to leave your establishment."

The doctor smiled soothingly.

"Come, my dear Sir, not quite so fast as all that—you are not quite—quite well yet."

"Quite well, Sir, as far as concerns your branch of the profession; and when I tell you that, it is my firm conviction that I never ought to have been here, and that I shall take care to make this generally known, I think you will see the expediency of making no attempt to detain me, contrary to my inclination."

The doctor again smiled compassionately. When were his unhappy patients ever known to remain, according to their own pleasure, within those walls?

"Very well, Sir—very well; no threats are needed—I only wait your friends' consent.

"*My friends!*" and there was a mournful intonation on these words. "Well, Sir," with a commanding air, "be so good as to gain that consent as soon as possible—my father's, my

brother's, and of one called Mabel Marryott, I conclude. I might not be so inclined to await patiently their decision, were I not unwilling," glancing at the high wall surrounding him, and towards the spot where he knew a keeper, in the absence of the doctor, watched his movements unseen, "to employ that physical force, which I see is expected in this place."

The doctor bowed complacently and withdrew, after stealing a significant look at his attendant minister. But the warning it intended to imply, was not needed. The spirit of Eugene Trevor was bowed down to the very dust with its load of bitterness.

He returned into the house, and remained that evening plunged in a dark dejection, which he felt the necessity of shaking off, lest that horrible thing should indeed creep over his mind, of which he was accused.

The following morning he again made application to Dr. Miller concerning his release, but received only an equivocal reply.

His brother was from home, and the necessary answer was not to be obtained; his father—he was ill, and they feared to bring the subject before him. Eustace reasoned, then com-

manded as to the expediency of waiving all such forms, and his dismissal being given without further prevarication or delay. This was declined civilly, as to a reasonable being; but still the mind of the unfortunate prisoner was irritated and goaded, by perceiving that every precaution was taken for the security of his person. He was loth to having recourse to any violent attempt to perpetrate his escape; but when one day, after time had gone on, and he plainly saw that some other authority than the doctor's influenced his detention; a feeling almost of real distraction began to take possession of his mind, and he determined that those hated walls should hold him no longer—that like a very madman, if it must be so, he would break his bonds and make the very neighbourhood ring with the wrongs he had received.

Though his noble spirit pined, his physical strength was returning. He often measured with his eye the form of the keeper, who so skilfully managed to dog his steps and movements, and thought how little it would take him, if it ever was needed, to fell that, comparatively speaking, puny form to the ground, or that of any one who attempted to oppose

his lawful exit from that house. A providential accident came at length to his aid.

One afternoon, when seated drearily, meditating over his fate, and endeavouring to invent expedients for his immediate emancipation, in the private sitting-room accorded to him, he heard a noise in the passage—a scraping of feet and sounds of horrid laughter. All this had become natural to his ear ; but it just occurred to him to look out of the door into the ante-room, where his constant *attaché* was generally in attendance. He was gone. Some peculiar exigency had demanded his immediate services towards the unfortunate, whose voice he had just heard.

A few hasty strides and Eustace was in the outer corridor: it was empty. He stood one second irresolute, which way to turn ; then offered up a silent prayer to Heaven and started forward, he knew not whither.

CHAPTER XX.

Howsoever these things be, a long farewell to Locksley
Hall,
Now for me the woods may wither, now for me the
roof-tree fall.

TENNYSON.

THE shades of evening were closing over Montrevor, and candles had just been lighted in the library, earlier than usual, as it seemed, for the completion of some urgent business with which its occupants were employed.

There were three individuals seated round the writing-table: Mr. Trevor, his son Eugene, and a third person, who, with pen in hand, with parchment opened before him, looked what he really was—a lawyer. He wrote some time in silence, the old man rocking himself backwards and forwards in his chair, as if nervous and weary; and the other leaning over

the table, watching the proceedings of the scribe with anxious interest plainly revealed in his dark, but handsome countenance. At length, finishing with a flourish, the man of business looked up, and asked for the witnesses.

Eugene Trevor was about hastily to rise and ring the bell, when, as if by fortunate coincidence, Mabel Marryott entered the room.

"Oh, exactly; here is one, at any rate," he said, resuming his seat; and the woman advancing, was directed by the lawyer to sign the papers on which he had been occupied.

Marryott still held the pen in her hand, having accomplished the act, and was glancing at her master's son with something of a congratulatory leer upon her countenance, as he bent over eagerly towards the document, whilst Mr. Trevor's shrill voice, at the same moment, was raised in irritated inquiry, as to who was to be the other witness; exclaiming, that they had better make haste and call some one else, and let the business be at an end.

"No need of that—I am here as witness!" exclaimed a deep, low voice, whose thrilling tones burst upon the listeners' ears like thunder before the lightning flash.

Three of the assembled party, at least—the father, the son and that guilty woman—shrank from the fire of that dark, full eye, which glanced accusingly down upon them ; for Eustace Trevor stood suddenly in the midst, at the very table round which was collected the startled group.

A faint shriek escaped the lips of Mr. Trevor, accompanied by the words :

“Secure him—he is mad !”.

But no one stirred. There was something more powerful than the fear of madness in their hearts, which kept the others rooted to the spot whereon they sat or stood.

The lawyer indeed, as was most natural considering the reported facts on which his late business had been founded, cast a timid glance towards the door, and, had he dared, would have risen to seek that aid which he concluded would be requisite.

There was besides something in the appearance of the unhappy man before him, which accorded with Mr. A.’s preconceived idea of his circumstances and condition—his countenance wild and haggard from the recent excitement and exertion which had attended his escape, as

well as from the uneffaced effects of grief and illness—his disordered and unusual appearance ; and the lawyer turned a glance towards his brother, to ascertain what was to be done ; but Eugene sat shrinking and ashy pale, endeavouring but in vain to meet with anything like composure, that steadfast glance the *madman* fixed upon his face.

A touch upon his arm, made Mr. A. look round. It was Mabel Marryott who thus sought to attract his attention ; and in obedience to her significant glance, he was about to rise stealthily and leave the room, when a voice of stern command detained him.

“ Be so good, Sir, as to remain where you are for the present. I may be allowed perhaps to glance my eye over this document, in which I have my suspicions I am in no small degree concerned.”

There was no resisting the tone in which these words were uttered. No hand save one, and that a woman's, was raised to prevent the firm but quiet movement with which the speaker stretched forth his hand and lifted the parchment from the table — Mabel Marryott

alone made a sharp but ineffectual movement, as if with all the power of her malignant will she would have secured the paper from the wronged one's grasp.

Perfect silence reigned whilst Eustace Trevor stood and read the paper through from beginning to end—a deed which, under plea of his own insanity and consequent incompetency, signed over to his brother Eugene, as guardian and trustee, the whole management and power over the entailed estate of Montrevor and the property appertaining thereto, at such time as he, Eustace Trevor, as heir-at-law, should by the testator Henry Trevor's death, come into nominal possession.

This, of course drawn out with legal amplitude and precision, Eustace attentively perused; then, when some probably were expecting its destruction, the document was calmly replaced upon the table.

“And now, Sir,” turning to the lawyer, “you will perhaps do me the favour to withdraw; and you, woman, I desire you to do the same.”

It was wonderful to see the power which the calm and lofty indignation, swelling in that

wronged man's breast, seemed to exercise over the minds of those who so late had triumphantly trampled upon his very heart.

As for the lawyer, he hesitated not to rise, and prepare to obey that implied command ; for he saw that neither of his employers were inclined to interfere.

The old man sat as one paralyzed, and the younger with compressed lips, and contracted downcast brow, seemed to await in sullen silence and discomfort the issue of the powerful scene ; and Marryott even, though she paused for a moment, considered better of it, and swept from the apartment with the air of a Lady Macbeth. Those three were then left together alone. The injured face to face with the foes of his own household—his father and his brother !

What should he say to these ? or rather to him—his brother ? To the other, he had long ceased to look but as on one who had forfeited all right to the name of father. “ For what one amongst ye, who if his son ask a fish will he give him a serpent ; or if he ask for bread will give him a stone,” and by what better manner of speech figure forth all that old man had ever done by him, his luckless son ? Nay, if this

were all—if he could but have paused here, and forgotten how that father had played the part of husband to a sainted mother; but he looked not on *him* now—he looked only to him, that mother's son; from whom, in spite of all he might have ever had to reprobate and forgive, it had not entered into his thoughts to conceive cruel perfidy such as that, of which since entering that room he had become but the more fully convinced he had been made the victim; and the bitterness of death—during that first instant that he thus stood reading in his brother Eugene's sullen, downcast brow, a too certain confirmation of his guilt—overwhelmed his soul.

But it passed over, and was gone; and a just and righteous indignation re-asserted its dominion in its place.

“Eugene,” he said, “that paper,” and he pointed to the legal document before him, “throws but too clear a light on the transactions of which I have been made the victim. Oh, how could you allow that demon, covetousness, to gain such empire over your heart? Cain, in the angry passion of the moment, slew his brother; but you, in cold-blooded calculation, could bend yourself to an act which time

and circumstances, perhaps remote, could alone turn to your advantage."

"Eustace!" stammered his brother; "I excuse this intemperate language on your part, for of course you cannot appreciate the circumstances of the case; but any one would be ready to justify the necessary, but painful, course of conduct to which we were reduced. In whatever state of mind you may be now, there are others to testify as to the fact—"

"Pshaw! justify—who will justify one, who, during the temporary delirium of a brain fever, confined his own brother to a mad-house! affixed to his name that stamp and stigma which must cling to it for the remainder of his days; or, still more unwarrantable and cruel, the evident attempts to detain him in that mad-house, long after any reasonable possible excuse was afforded? But I can plainly read the motive which thus influenced you—too plainly, alas! Eugene, two months ago I had not conceived such conduct possible; but I know you *now*. I think I can pretty well divine what has been the course of conduct you have pursued; you have been to London, perhaps—"

He paused. There was no denial.

“ You went to your clubs ; and there very surely took means to establish the fact of your eldest brother’s melancholy condition—his insanity, his confinement ! ”

Eugene Trevor in a hoarse and angry voice would have attempted some reply, but Eustace’s indignant voice overpowered him.

“ And then you brought that man down,” he continued, “ to fill up the measure of your iniquity, and one scratch of the pen alone was needed now to make it good. Let it be done. That paper of his, that base and villainous forgery, now lies before me at my mercy. But I scorn to touch it. I treat it as it is—a worthless, valueless nothing. If I but chose to follow your example—go, call my friends and neighbours about me, declare before them all the unnatural fraud which has been practised upon me ; yes, show them this,” and he bared his blackened, wounded wrists, “ and ring in their astounded ears, what, and *for what*, it entered a brother’s heart to conceive an act of such atrocity ; then, do you think that I could not manage to make those who knew, and cared for me, credit my testimony before that of an abandoned woman and two ignorant

time-serving country doctors? Ask Dr. Miller, would he even dare to say, my attack was anything but the temporary delirium of fever?"

"Merciful heavens, Eugene!" murmured Mr. Trevor, trying in an under tone to gain his younger son's attention, without being heard by the other. "Is there no one at hand to stop him—to secure him?"

But Eustace caught the muttered syllables, and turned sternly round.

"No one, Sir; who will dare to do it? Think not that I entered *your* house without precaution ~~against~~ what I there had every reason to ~~expect~~. These," drawing a brace of pistols from his pocket, "I found opportunity to obtain; and should one of these poor trembling menials by your orders, dare—"

"Eugene! Eugene! are they loaded? for the love of Heaven save me; he will murder us all!" Mr. Trevor exclaimed in terror.

"Eustace! this is indeed madness!" the brother would have said, but shame choked the words within his throat; "this violence is most uncalled for. What motive could there now be on our part for having recourse to such ex-

pedients as you seem to fear. I assure you, you are quite at liberty to remain, or depart at your pleasure ; and as for what has been done, I am quite ready to answer for my conduct," he added doggedly, "if you choose to drag the matter forward so publicly."

"Would you be so prepared, Eugene ? Dare not repeat that falsehood, wretched man. Fear not, I will not drag you forward to such a test. I hate, I curse you not for what you have done, but the cause, the sin which brought you to commit it. I do abhor, nay, I am sickened unto death, of the very world in which I have suffered so much, and in which sin so despicable and revolting can exist ; still more with the home (if it be not sacrilege to use that hallowed name in such a case) in which it asserts such hateful power. The very air I breathe beneath it seems to choke me ; if all the gold which fills the coffers of its master were laid in heaps before my feet, that would not make it tolerable to my heart. Rejoice then, when I swear that never under this roof together with you two—my most unnatural relations, shall I again set my foot. I have borne and suffered too much within its walls. I willingly resign all sonship, brotherhood, with

those who have trampled on every human tie. I leave you to carry out, as far as in you lies, your hearts' desires. I shake the very dust off my feet, and depart. I leave this place to-night, this country, perhaps, to-morrow, caring not that for the present the stigma you have cast upon my name must remain. You, Sir, should we never meet again on earth, may Heaven forgive! *You*, Eugene, farewell; *we* may meet again in this world, but never again as brothers."

He turned, and was gone. None saw him depart. He went out into the dark night; and many within that house who had heard of his startling arrival, concluded that he had been secretly restored to the asylum from which he had made his escape. Only a few days after, an old servant, much attached to Mrs. Trevor and her second son, who on his dismissal from Montrevor had served Eustace during his residence at Oxford, appeared at the hall, with authority from his master to gather and pack up all the effects belonging to him; and having done so without molestation, he silently conveyed them away.

He threw no light upon the subject, or on

his master's destination. Indeed, it was soon afterwards ascertained, by those chiefly interested in the matter, that he was equally ignorant on the point as themselves.

Eugene Trevor remained for some time at Montrevor, then returned to the world, to find the general impression apparently continuing as it was before, concerning the derangement and consequent confinement of his brother. Then it was deemed advisable to report that the unhappy young man was so far recovered, that he had gone abroad under proper guardianship; and the world, too busy with its own affairs to keep up any long-sustained interest or inquiry into the fate and fortune of those removed out of their light, were contented to suppose this to be the case; and when some years had run their course, as we have seen, and nothing more had been seen or heard of the unhappy Eustace Trevor, many gave him up as lost for ever to society, and Eugene, gay, prosperous, and invested with all importance and privilege in his father's house, had soon assumed in the eyes of the world a certain—though it might be somewhat equivocal—position as heir, under some few restrictions, to the property and estates of Montrevor.

CHAPTER XXI.

Fain would I fly the haunts of men ;
I seek to shun, not hate mankind.
My breast requires the sullen glen,
Whose gloom may suit a darkened mind.
Oh that to me the wings were given
Which bear the turtle to her nest !
Then would I cleave the vault of Heaven,
To flee away, and be at rest.

BYRON.

ON the borders of a lake in one of the wildest and most remote parts of North Wales, stands a rude inn, the resort, during the proper season of the year, of those who for the sake of the fishing the lake affords, are content to put up with the homely fare and simple accommodation it affords. But when that time has passed away—when the calm, glittering lake is deformed by constant rains, and lashed into fury by the driving storms of winter—when those majestic

mountains have exchanged their ever-varying glories for mists and blackness, have donned their wintry garb, and are in character with wintry skies—there cannot be imagined a more desolate and dreary scene than that spot presents ; and the inn, of course, stands comparatively tenantless. Yet for three whole winter months, a gentleman of whom none of nobler appearance had ever perhaps honoured it with their presence, made that humble hostelry his abode.

Alone he came, and alone he remained. He dispatched or received no communication from beyond those mist-covered mountains which surrounded him ; but little did those simple, unsophisticated people care to wonder or inquire. Unimportuned by curiosity, the visitor pursued his solitary existence, climbing those bleak and trackless mountains, or tossing upon the stormy lake. No sound of human voice, but in the uncouth and unknown language of the country, scarcely every falling on his ear.

He had some few books with him, but he scarcely read, save in one, the Bible. Plenty of money the stranger was provided with, for he paid his expenses handsomely, and gave often

freely to those few poor who came in his way ; but yet his very name remained a mystery, if that could be called mystery, which none cared to inquire or ascertain ; and when the first warm beams of springtide sun melted the snow upon the mountain-tops, as suddenly as he came, so he departed, none knew or asked whither.

But he did not, as it seems, go far. In a small Welsh town, not twenty miles distant, a few days after, and that stranger, who it seemed had, uninjured, so roughly exposed himself to the fatigues and inclemency of the wintry weather during his sojourn in his late retreat, lay dangerously ill in a comfortable little inn belonging to the place ; unknown here also, but tended with all the disinterested care and kindness which seldom fails to cheer the stranger in that mountain land. Skilful medical attendance was happily provided ; and the fever, against whose advances the sufferer, with a peculiarly nervous dread, seemed to battle—by proper means was subdued, and the sick man partially recovered.

As he lay upon his bed one of the first mornings after his convalescence, a merry peal from the bells of the neighbouring church burst upon his ear. Merrier and merrier they conti-

nued to ring, and the invalid turned sadly and wearily round upon his pillow, as if he would fain have escaped from sounds of joy, harmonizing so little with his lonely heart.

“Truly there is a joy with which the stranger intermeddleth not.”

But still those sounds, as if in very mockery and despite, continued to clash forth at intervals during the day, caring little for the sick hearts and wounded spirits upon which that merriment might chance to jar.

“You are very gay,” the stranger said with a melancholy smile to his landlady, when she came to attend him that day; and the remark was answered by the ready information, that the bells were this day ringing on occasion of a marriage which that morning had taken place in the neighbourhood, the bride being a young lady of a family of long standing in these parts. The gentleman, a widower and a Scotchman, &c. But all this her listener heeded not.

* * * *

“Bells thou soundest merrily
When the bridal party
To the church doth hie;

Bells thou soundest solemnly,
When on Sabbath mornings,
Fields deserted lie."

It was Sunday morning, and all the people of the place were flocking to the Welsh service of the church ; but the English stranger mingled not with these. No—rather as he had turned wearily away from the mad music of the marriage-bell, did his languid footsteps turn aside, when now in more solemn cadence it sounded in his ear.

Not as yet was his soul attuned to enter that house of God, and offer up prayers and praises with a thankful heart. To that lonely man, it would have been indeed requiring a song, a melody, in his heaviness—to "sing the Lord's song in a strange land."

He left the quiet town—crossed the bridge above the swift-flowing river, and wandered far away, slowly, as his partially-renewed strength alone would admit, and resting often, but still as if he breathed more freely the farther and farther he felt himself proceeding from the haunts of men ; whilst at every step he took, beauty and magnificence, decking that bright spring morning in their best array, met his

enchanted view; and the sense of enjoyment seemed to return, and that of loneliness to be —removed.

For the young man's mood was one of those most sensitively to realise the idea, that "high mountains are a feeling, but the hum of human cities torture."

Thus he wandered on, till a hamlet, crowned by the woods of one or two gentlemen's seats, came in view; and he was forced by his weakness to stop, and crave a cup of milk at a quiet farm in its outskirts, its simple inmates also inviting him to sit down and rest; and then he found that time had passed much swifter than he thought, for it was long past noon.

Whilst he was lingering still, the church bells here too began to ring; and Eustace Trevor (for he it was) felt that he could not escape from the voice which seemed to cry unto his soul: "Let us go up into the house of the Lord."

The little church appeared to be almost empty, when he first entered; but an old lady and gentleman came in at the same time, and seeing the stranger, immediately offered him a

seat in their large square pew ; and he, though far from willingly, could not but accept the civility.

Other members were added to the congregation, and then a clergyman of infirm appearance entered the reading-desk, awaiting but that the noise of the school-children's feet mounting to the little gallery should cease, to commence in a feeble voice the service.

Inattentive the ear—insensible the heart of that man who, having suffered deeply, finds himself unaffected, when first, after some period of cessation, prayer after prayer, clause after clause of our beautiful Liturgy breathes upon his ear.

Eustace Trevor was not that man ; and fervent were the emotions inspired in a breast which long had yielded itself to a kind of morbid gloomy insensibility ; and it was, perhaps, only the presence of strangers which rendered him able to restrain them from their more open demonstration. Not, however, was it until the wild voices of the mountain children, enriched by notes of less untamed beauty, were raised in songs of praise, that any outward object diverted the absorption of his rapt spirit.

Then Eustace Trevor lifted up his eyes, and could not fail to remark three young ladies also in the gallery, who stood side by side, mingling their voices with the humble choir; and their appearance at once fixed his attention, not so much for any personal beauty they might possess, as for the goodness, innocence, and unaffected devotion shining so clearly on each upturned face. In proof of which it might have been observed, that after the first general glance over the group, it was not so much on the elder of the sisters, lovely in a most striking degree, neither upon the blooming Hebe of fifteen, as upon that pale, and gentle-looking girl, who stood between the two, on whom the stranger's eye more especially lingered—and loved her, even as he gazed.

For there was something in the pensive sweetness of those eyes—the open purity of the brow—the meek and quiet, yet high-toned spirit, which shone from every feature of the young girl's face, that went directly to his heart. His excited fancy even travelled so far, as to behold in her a likeness to that being who had passed into the heavens; and once—only once, when her voice in sweet but timid accents

swelled singly in the choir, he held his breath to catch each low, yet thrilling tone, "for it sounds to him like his mother's voice singing in Paradise."

Eustace Trevor returned to the inn, but more than once during the following week did the stranger turn his pony's head towards the valley of Ll—— (we will spare our readers a name they perhaps would not be able to read aright) ; and on Sunday afternoon, he did not fail again to seek the village church, expecting that it would be for the last time—for he purposed departing on the morrow—it not suiting his intentions to remain in any one place so long as to draw down upon himself remark or inquiry.

And perhaps a few weeks more, had he carried out his designs, might have found him a wanderer on a foreign shore. But who can tell what a day may bring forth?

It was early when he arrived at the church, the bells even had not began ; and on reparing to a retired part of the church-yard, where a lovely view was to be obtained, he suddenly came in contact with the clergyman who had officiated the previous Sunday.

He bowed to Eustace—who returned the salutation—and passed on with feeble steps, having regarded the stranger somewhat curiously; but scarcely had the latter reached his destined resting-place, when he heard a footstep approaching, and looking round saw the clergyman had returned, and immediately accosted him.

“Sir,” speaking with evident difficulty, “I must beg you to excuse the liberty I am taking in thus addressing you; but may I ask—I scarcely dare to hope it to be the case—may I ask,” glancing at Eustace’s black garb, and the deep crape round his hat, “whether by any chance you are a clergyman?”

Eustace was taken by surprise, but a melancholy smile crossed his features, as he looked and murmured an affirmative.

The inquirer’s countenance evidently brightened.

“I conclude, Sir, that you are a stranger in these parts,” he rejoined. “I think I saw you here last Sunday—I scarcely know whether you will not think me very bold, when I ask you whether you would be so very obliging as to assist me in the service this afternoon? A

friend whom I expected has failed me at the last moment; and you will hear, by my voice, that if I am able to get through a ten minutes' sermon, it will be as much as I can manage."

Eustace Trevor thought so indeed—but the sudden demand upon his services almost bewildered him, and for a moment he was silent. The clergyman looked a little surprised at the apparent hesitation, a perception of which recalled Eustace to recollection.

What right had he to refuse—what excuse could he offer?

He looked upon the evidently suffering man, and said he should be happy to lend him the assistance he required.

The clergyman thanked him warmly, and they walked together to the vestry.

Eustace Trevor, with strange feelings, found himself thus called to enter upon the duties of the profession, it had become almost like a dream to him ever to have embraced.

CHAPTER XXII.

This man
Is of no common order, as his front
And presence here denote.

BYRON.

“OH Lord correct me, but with judgment;
not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to
nothing.”

Not an eye perhaps amongst that little
congregation that was not lifted up, when,
in thrilling strains, like the rich deep notes of
an organ, the stranger's voice swept through
the low arches of the simple temple, in that
opening sentence of the service.

Not one amongst them, the most simple and
illiterate, who did not hold their breath as he
proceeded, lest they should lose one note of a
voice

“Most musical, most melancholy,”

which gave such new magic to each familiar

word of prayer, or praise, or exhortation he offered up.

"Who could that be? who read the prayers, Mary?" said Selina Seaham to her sister, when they left the church. "It is the same stranger who sat in our pew last Sunday."

"What a beautiful voice!" was the answer.

"Most beautiful; but more than that, Mary, I never saw a more striking looking person."

"I did not look at him," was the quiet reply; "I only *felt* that the prayers and lessons were read as *we* seldom hear them."


"Poor Mr. Wynne! it was painful to listen to him afterwards. It is really cruel that he cannot get a more regular assistant: Sir Hugh should really manage it for him. Mary, do use your influence over the worthy Baronet when he returns," the sister added slyly.

Mary blushed, and shook her head. She had a short time ago yielded up all claims upon the influence she might so largely have possessed; but ere the following Sunday came round, the wishes of the young ladies, in this respect, had been satisfied beyond their most sanguine expectations.

* * * *

Eustace Trevor had not been able to escape from the church, at the close of the service, without a renewal of the clergyman's thanks for the services he had so obligingly rendered him. Indeed, even then he did not seem at all inclined to part from his stranger friend; and after a little more conversation respecting the beauties of the neighbourhood, he offered—seeing that Eustace also had his horse in readiness—to conduct him a little *en détour* from the route back to —, in order to show him the view from his own house, most romantically situated amidst the woods on the high ground flanking the valley. Eustace could not well decline the offer, and they rode on together.

His companion had soon shown himself to be a man of higher birth and education, than are usually found amongst ministers of such remote districts of the Principality. He had been settled for many years in this living, and was enthusiastic in his love and admiration of the country; so much so, that it seemed not even his failing health could induce him to relinquish his post; although, as it had been the case this afternoon, both himself and con-



gregation often ran the risk of being put to great inconvenience and extremity: the asthmatic complaint under which he laboured being of a most uncertain and capricious character, and the English service being entirely dependant on his powers.

All this the good man communicated to Eustace on the way. His frank and simple confidence on every subject connected with himself and his concerns, without the least demonstration of curiosity respecting his companion, winning gradually on Eustace's sensations of security and ease, he accepted the clergyman's invitation to enter his abode; the beauty and romantic seclusion of whose situation excited his deep admiration and envy.

The original, but amiable and intelligent conversation of its possessor, won more and more on his favour and confidence; the other, on his part, evidently felt himself to be in the society of a being to whom some more than common degree of interest attached. His keen observant eye saw imprinted upon that striking countenance more than any mere bodily illness, from which the stranger reported himself to have but lately recovered. The snares of death

might have encompassed him round about, and the pains of hell got hold of him ; but they were those sorrows and pains such as the Psalmist himself had gained such deep experience of, rather than any physical affliction which had engraven those strong signs there.

It was truly, as a great writer of the day has expressed himself, "the mournfulest face that ever was seen—an altogether tragic, heart-affecting face. There was in it, as foundation, the softness, tenderness, gentle affection, as of a child ; but all this, as it were, congealed into sharp, isolated, hopeless pain ; a silent pain—silent and scornful. The lip curled, as it were, in a kind of god-like disdain of the thing that is eating out his heart ; as if he whom it had power to torture were greater than the cause."

"The eye, too, that dark earnest eye, looking out as in a kind of surprise, a kind of inquiry, why the world was of that sort !"

Mr. Wynne had many questions put to him concerning the remarkable looking stranger, from the ladies of Glan Pennant, when they met the next day. All he could tell them was, that the stranger was perfectly unknown to him, that he had no idea even of his name ; that he

now talked of leaving the neighbourhood early that week, but Mr. Wynne added, he was to call at the inn at ——, and hoped to find that he was able to persuade his new acquaintance to remain and explore a little longer the beauties of the vicinity, and at the same time, he slyly added, “give them a second benefit of his beautiful voice.” The young ladies as slyly hoped their worthy friend might have his hopes crowned with success. And their desire was not ungratified. The following Sunday the beautiful voice once more made itself heard.

A great deal had taken place to change the tenor of Eustace Trevor’s views and purposes during that one short week. Only too readily had he yielded to the parting persuasions of Mr. Wynne, that he would at least extend his stay beyond the day he had mentioned as having been fixed for his departure. Nay, even as he turned his horse’s head back towards ——, had the yearning desire diffused itself through his heart, that instead of that hopeless, homeless, outcast fate to which he had devoted himself, it could have been his lot to find a little spot of earth like that in which this day he had first performed the duties of a pro-

fession he had once thought to commence under such different circumstances—a spot, from the spirit of beauty, innocence, purity and peace, seeming to breathe around, as contrasted with that world—that *home*, from which he had been driven, appeared to his imagination scarcely less than a little heaven upon earth, a different sphere to any in which he had yet existed.

But this was but an imaginary suggestion—a dream-like fancy which vaguely flitted across his mind, ill accordant with his dark and bitter destiny. The very next day his new friend called. They rode out again together, and one or two such meetings only served to strengthen between these two men, of such different ages, characters and circumstances, that strange and sudden liking which is often found to spring up between two passing strangers of to-day, as necessarily as flowers expand from bud to blossom in the course of a few sunny and dewy hours of one vernal morning. As much then was elicited from Eustace, as revealed pretty clearly to the other the purposeless circumstances of his present position—

“A bark sent forth to sail alone,
At midnight on the moonlight sea.”

Why not then, like himself, be content to tarry in the little haven of peace where Providence had guided him? Why again return to drift at large upon that lonely ocean?

Eustace Trevor shook his head with a melancholy smile, though at the same time his pale brow flushed at the suggestion.

"That cannot be, my good Sir," he said, "unless at least you can guarantee for me such seclusion in this wild and lonely region of yours as accords with the peculiar circumstances of my case. You will be afraid of me when I say, that it is my wish to conceal my place of destination from every person in the world, beyond these mountains, to whom my name could possibly be known."

Mr. Wynne paused at first, with a look of surprise; but after for a moment steadily fixing his eyes upon the noble countenance of Eustace, he exclaimed:

"Not at all, not at all, my dear Sir. I am quite satisfied with believing that you have the best reasons for such a course of conduct; that misfortune, not any fault of your own, has reduced you to such an alternative. And I can assure you, you have come to the right place

for getting rid of old friends or enemies, whichever they may be ; for during the twenty years I have been settled here, not one of those of whom I formerly could boast has ever found his way unbidden over these impregnable barriers ; so set your mind at rest on that score. Come and stay with me at my hermitage, till such time as you see fit ; and then, if you tire of the company of an old fellow like myself, we can find you out another as secure."

" My dear Sir, this kindness on your part is beyond the expression of mere common thanks. Alas ! were it only possible that I could avail myself of it ; but the facts connected with my present position are of such a peculiar nature, that unless you are made fully acquainted with them, it is impossible that you can rightly appreciate the extent of security I desire ; and yet, though your confidence, thank God ! is not misplaced, those facts are of such a sort as make it almost impossible for me to reveal them. At the same time, of your generous trust, which has not yet allowed you to seek enlightenment even as to my name, nothing would induce me to take further advantage. Either I leave this place to-morrow, or my

incognito, as far as concerns yourself, must be removed."

"And why not, if that is the only alternative which presents itself, tell your sad history to the old man ; what then ? In his breast it will lie as safely buried as if you committed the secret to yonder lichened rock. You are young, Sir ; you have written in your countenance that which bespeaks you one of a higher order of intellect and capacity than befits this narrow sphere ; but yet for a time, till this storm is blown over, tarry here."

We need not pursue word for word, step by step, the relation, with the issue of which my readers are fully acquainted. We have only to say, that Eustace Trevor finally confided his whole history to Mr. Wynne, under the strictest promise of secrecy ; and that the good man listened with the quiet, unwondering spirit which spoke his knowledge of that world lying in wickedness, or rather, the desperate wickedness of the human heart ; and whilst clearly perceiving the morbid nature of the feelings which had prompted the victim of such wickedness to so extraordinary a course of proceeding, the interest of his own romantic mind was but the more

excited ; and keenly he entered into every plan which might facilitate the detention of Eustace, taking upon himself to have, accompanied with all secrecy and silence, every arrangement made necessary to his comfort and convenience. Even with regard to the assumed name the latter saw it expedient to embrace, and to which he did not see any objection, Mr. Wynne came to his aid.

He had once, many years ago, a dear friend named Edward Temple, now no more—by such he should be known for the present, and under that appellation he should yield him any voluntary assistance in the duties of his profession as might accord with his taste and inclination. So then it was arranged, and under these circumstances the so-named Edward Temple became established at Ll——.

CHAPTER XXIII.

I never thought a life could be
So flung upon one hope, as mine, dear love, on thee.

N. P. WILLIS.

No sooner did old Mr. Majoribanks learn from the rector that he had prevailed upon Mr. Temple to fix his residence amongst them, than he was anxious to pay the stranger every possible attention and civility, calling upon him to invite him to dinner, or do anything that might contribute in any way to his comfort and happiness. But Mr. Wynne was obliged to subdue this impulse of hospitality, making the good old gentleman and his family to understand that Mr. Temple being driven, by some heavy private affliction, to the alleviation of his sorrows by solitude and seclusion, the kindest thing would be, for the present, till the poignancy of his feelings should be softened by time, to refrain as much as

possible from crossing his wishes in this respect. The inmates of Glan Pennant, in the most delicate manner, respected and carried out these instructions ; so that, by some gentle and gradual attraction, rather than by any outward effort on their part, did the recluse seem finally drawn towards them in more close and intimate communication ; till finally, he became not only, as at first—the silent and secret minister to all those little schemes of charity and benevolence the young ladies had so much at heart—but also their personal assistant and supporter.

Often during the time they were thus thrown intimately together, did Mr. Wynne, like others perhaps besides, think it could not be but that the lovely Selina Seaham, the flower of Glan Pennant, as the good clergyman was wont to call her, would charm away the sorrows of that noble heart ; and as for the impression Edward Temple might make on that young lady, he thought it was a case decided. However it might have been on that latter point, we have seen that our hero's heart escaped the predicted spell—although in other ways he might esteem and admire the fair lady—and how another charm had secretly enthralled him.

* * * *

It had been in no slight degree startling to Eustace Trevor to discover the relationship existing between the Seahams and his friend de Burgh; and at first it had nearly determined him to leave the place, lest in any way this fact should tend to his betrayal. But Mr. Wynne soon made it his business to ascertain for his satisfaction that no such chance existed.

Glan Pennant was not visited by any of the young ladies' relations, and never had been for many years. Even the wedding of the last married sister had been unattended by any of them, and indeed it was very rare that regular visitors of any sort came to the place. Sir Hugh Morgan occasionally had a friend or two in a bachelor way, whose society was not much in his line, or likely to consist of any of Eustace's former acquaintance, being generally natives of his own country.

So far Eustace Trevor's mind was set at rest, though still the fact of the relationship haunted his fancy as a strange striking coincidence. Little did he divine all that this coincidence was destined farther to comprise. Little did he conceive when in his solitary rambles after his

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settlement at Ll—— he sometimes chanced to meet that young and gentle girl, who had so attracted his interest and attention that first Sunday in the gallery of the church ; sometimes tracking with fond alacrity the footsteps of her brother to some lake or mountain stream—or seated in some shady dell, or on some heathy hill, with her sweet smile and dreamy eyes bent upon her book—or plunged in pensive reverie—little did he divine what dream, or rather the mere shadow of a dream, his appearance might chance to dissipate.

It may appear unnatural, that during those few years of acquaintance with one so worthy to win the love and admiration of a mind like Mary Seaham's — under circumstances too, which, considering the nature of her disposition, might have seemed peculiarly favourable to produce that end — no corresponding sentiments had been awakened in her breast towards Eustace Trevor.

Indeed, we scarcely think it likely this could have proved the case, had the feelings she inspired in his breast been earlier made apparent ; but it must be remembered that Mary was very young when Eustace Trevor first came to

LI——, that he arrived too, arrayed in attributes exactly suited to banish from a mind like hers any ideas connected with that of love.

The mighty sorrow of which Mr. Wynne had spoken, and which sat so plainly written on his beautiful countenance—every superior excellence of mind and character, more intimate acquaintance only served to heighten—had conspired to render him, in the estimation of the young girl's child-like, but high-toned mind, as one of that order of beings towards whom reverence and admiration were the only feelings to which, without presumption, one like her could ever dare to aspire.

There was, besides, a distant melancholy reserve in his manner, she imagined, more apparent in his bearing towards herself than to her sisters, which still more effectually contributed to produce this effect; while her sisters, on their part, although equally enthusiastic in their admiration of their new friend, were much more inclined to look upon him in the light of a common mortal like themselves—one indeed for whom it would have been no such great stretch of presumption to entertain feelings of

a less exalted character; though the careless youth of the one put all such considerations out of the question, and the good sense of the other stifled any rising inclination of her heart to bestow its affections—when it became too soon plainly evident how little chance existed of winning a corresponding return—from him who, two years after his arrival, calmly assisted in the ceremony which united her to the young officer, who had proved himself less invulnerable to the powers of attraction she possessed. Yet far was Eustace Trevor from being naturally prone to coldness and insensibility on a point like this; he was one

“To gaze on woman’s beauty as a star,
Whose purity and distance make it fair.”

And fair indeed did it seem to him, when on his night of darkness it shone forth with so bright and clear a light as in the daughters of Glan Pennant. But that light to him must be indeed far distant, for the morbid sensibility with which he contemplated the dark features of his past history, cast its blasting influence even over this purest and most natural point of his heart’s ambition; and mournfully

he would silence any allusions his friend would venture to make upon the subject.

His was not a fate he could solicit any being, blessing and blessed like those fair girls, to share; and sadly would he seek to quench the feeling which, day by day, year by year—as the gentle excellence, the sweet attractions of Mary Seaham were more and more developed—gathered strength within his heart.

This it was which made her deem his manner cold and distant, in comparison with that he evinced towards her sisters. Little did she imagine how the spirit of that noble-minded man bowed down before her mild, unconscious might; how, if he turned away coldly from her soft words and timid glance, it was because he feared their power might draw forth a manifestation of that he had vowed to himself to conceal—

“ I might not dim thy fortune bright,
With love so sad as mine.”

No—we see he kept his secret but too well—so well, that not only the object herself, but even his anxious and much-interested friend Mr. Wynne, never suspected a truth which

would have given him such unfeigned delight.

A year before the period at which our story opens, and soon after performing, to his no great satisfaction, the marriage ceremony for his lovely young friend Selina Seaham, the worthy man had left Ll——; yielding at length to the persuasions of his friends that he would, according to the advice of the medical men, try the effect of a year or two's sojourn on the continent in alleviating his troublesome and obstinate, if not mortal, complaint.

An efficient substitute had been found to fill his place. Eustace Trevor also remained, as we have seen, continuing to render those services which, year by year, had only been the more valuable and distinguished—services never to be erased from the memories of that little flock, with whom, during his ministry amongst them, he had rendered himself equally honoured and beloved. But the following year, as we have seen, brought events of no small importance to the fates and fortunes of the principal personages of our history. •

The determination of the Majoribanks to leave Glan Pennant, the marriage of Agnes

Seaham, the peculiar nature of Mary's circumstances; and how, consequent on those events, finally influenced by the last consideration, Eustace Trevor in that momentous interview on the heathy hill's side—casting his future hopes of happiness on one die—gave way to the long-checked, long-concealed impulses of his heart, and poured forth his tale of love upon her startled ear. Need we recapitulate the sequel, "How pale the startled lady stood" on the borders of that green and silent hill.

It was too late to open before her eyes the treasure which had so long been within her reach. He had failed to touch that chord, by which alone the heart of woman can be moved—Mary's heart so pure, so good, was yet a woman's. What, that for months and years devotedly he had lingered by her side, loving her in secret with a love so fervent and so deep, she had remained insensible to that hidden spell; whilst one glance from the stranger's dark eyes—one low thrilling tone of his flattering voice had sufficed to pluck away her heart. But so it was, and so it oft-times is; and there is little need to tell again how Eustace Trevor, his last reed broken, his last ray of light extin-

guished, turned away to seek his sad and silent home—

“The shadow of a starless night,”

thrown upon that world, in which henceforth he must move so desolate and alone.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Thou too art gone—and so is my delight,
And therefore do I weep, and inly bleed,
With this last bruise upon a broken reed.
Thou too art ended—what is left me now?
For I have anguish yet to bear—and how?

BYRON.

As may be supposed, the peaceful vale of Ll—— from this time forth became an altered place to Eustace Trevor. “There are places in the world we never wish to see again, however dear they be to us.” Such to his disappointed heart was Mary Seaham’s deserted home, and every spot in the vicinity haunted by associations connected with that loved being. Yet he lingered, pursuing his former avocations, partly from principle, partly from the painful pleasure thus afforded, partly from the anxious desire to remain upon the spot, where alone he could hope to receive tidings of his lost one.

A strange restless foreboding had been excited in his mind from the first moment that he had heard of Mary's intended destination ; and it was this, no doubt, which in a great measure urged him to take the decisive step which had proved so unavailing. Not of course had he in any way embodied the real nature of the misfortune his ominous fears presented ; that event would indeed have seemed a coincidence too fearful to be conceived probable ; but besides there being something most repellant to his feelings in the idea of that gentle object of his heart's unhappy affections wandering away into the sphere now so darkly associated in his mind—some presentiment of danger and sorrow to herself, quite unconnected with any selfish considerations, had darkly mingled. All through that summer then, whose brightness to him was gone ; all that autumn too, till like his own fallen hopes, the yellow leaf lay thick around, "and the days were dark and dreary," he stayed ; then—then—had reached his ears, at first by vague and dull report, tidings which froze into the very ice of winter the life-blood in his heart—"Miss Mary Seaham was going to be married to a very rich and handsome gentleman

of those parts ; and his name—yes, that was it—he would have thanked Heaven on his knees, had it been any other name on earth—that name. It came with terrible exactness, that name was “Eugene Trevor.” Then, indeed, a dreadful feeling of horror, of despair, assailed him. His cup of bitterness was full ; could malignant fate do more to crush him ?

Mary Seaham, the wife of his brother ! Of him who had dealt so treacherously by him, who without cause, had proved himself his deadly enemy. *His* wife ? nay his victim. Another angel victim, of coveteousness, tyranny, and vice. It must not, nay, it *should* not be ; anything—everything must be done to avert the sacrifice. In a word, every other consideration was at an end. He left Ll—— and went to London ; there he traced out that faithful servant to whom we have alluded, and through him took steps to gain a too sure confirmation of what he had heard, and besides that, many particulars concerning the mode of life of his brother, during the interval of their separation, which only served to invest with fresh horror, the idea of his union with Mary.

His course was taken. He wrote to his

brother the momentous letter, which turned the current of poor Mary's bliss.

"When you and I parted, Eugene, nearly five years ago, it was with the sole determination on my part, never again to seek communication with a man who had acted as none other, than *a brother*, could have acted, without drawing upon himself the just retribution on my part, such conduct so justly deserved, I mean the public exposure of its villainy to society—to the world. But as it was—more in sorrow than in anger—sorrow which in the estimation of those less scrupulous and sensitive than myself, might have been deemed carried to a morbid and irrational extent—in sorrow of heart, the bitterness of death could hardly surpass, sorrow and amazement that such perfidy could exist in one I had loved as my own mother's son; the impulse of my grieved and wounded spirit prompted me to act in a manner exactly the reverse. My determination had been to repair to some distant foreign land. But mere accident, or I should say, hidden Providence, ordered it otherwise. I spent the winter in a wild unfrequented part of North Wales; and on leaving that, was taken ill at a small town, some

miles distant. A few weeks more and circumstances caused me to fix my wandering steps in a secluded valley, where for the few succeeding years I assisted the clergyman of the place in the duties of his profession, and in conformity with the course of conduct I was pursuing, under the name of Edward Temple. Does this give you any clue to the motive of the present unwelcome communication? Have you ever heard that unfamiliar name pass the lips of her, whom report tells me you are to make your wife—the lips, I mean, of Mary Seaham? if so as it would have been but natural, she may have further spoken, and told you of the love she had inspired in that same Edward Temple's breast; and you smiled, no doubt, in pity at the disappointed ambition of the country curate. Eugene, now indeed, I own that you have honourably won that—to which, in comparison, all that by wrong and treachery you ever sought to rob me is as dross indeed, in my estimation—the love of as pure a heart, as angel-like a spirit as ever breathed in the form of woman. But this, Eugene, must suffice you; here your triumph must end; unless, indeed, you care to

prove your affection by a stronger test than I imagine it would be able to stand ; for at once I come to the point, and tell you Eugene, that I cannot suffer this concerted marriage of yours to take place, without a powerful effort on my part, to avert it—to save the pure and gentle being whom I shall ever love, from the fate that marriage, I feel, must ever entail upon her.

“That it springs from no bitter feelings of disappointment or rivalry, on my part ; but is as disinterested in its nature, as if I had never loved Mary Seaham but as a brother might have loved a sister, God truly knows ; but it would be throwing words away, I fear, to attempt to convince one like you—in whose imagination the possibility of any such purity and disinterestedness of motive cannot exist. Well, interpret it as you may—only break off this engagement, which, from what I hear of the sentiments of some of her friends, will not be so very difficult. Break it off, and for what I care, the world may still think me mad ; for what I care, you may still retain the position you now hold—so much as it appears, to your own satisfaction and con-

tentment—in the eyes of society. Refuse to do this, and I come forward, and ask the world—ask her friends—ask Mary herself, whether a man who had acted as you have done, is worthy to be her husband ; and then, I am much mistaken, if when that delusive veil, which now robes her idol, be thus withdrawn—she, yes, Mary, does not shrink with horror, from what is there revealed.

“Spare yourself, Eugene—spare her—spare her pure eyes, her innocent spirit this exposure. You will say, the alternative is as cruel—that her affection is too great to bear the destruction of her hopes, without such pain and grief as none who really loved her, as *I* profess to do, would willingly inflict.

“This may be—her love may be true, and deep. The tears she may shed at its destruction be bitter—time may be required to heal the wound. But were these tears to swell the ocean’s tide, or the wound to prove incurable, far better even this, than to live the life—to die the miserable death of your father’s wife—of her husband’s mother !

“And what in your career, Eugene, even setting aside that one crime, with which I am

personally concerned, is there, which can ensure her any better destiny ?

“No ; your mode of life during the last five years, I have taken measures to ascertain. Can you deny that it has been one long course of sin, of profligacy ?

“One dark deed, followed by atonement and remorse, might have been less baneful to her happiness, than the systematic career of vice you now habitually pursue.

“What more can I add ; but that I shall expect your written answer. I feel assured you will, no less than myself, desire, if possible, to avoid all personal communication. Direct to the General Post Office, London, where, till I am assured that my object is properly secured, I shall remain ; and now, Eugene, farewell ! God knows, that everything in the terms and substance of this letter, which may appear dictated by a harsh or threatening spirit, springs rather from the wretched circumstances of the case, our most unnatural and unavoidable position, one towards another—not from the temper of my mind towards you. Heaven be my witness, that I would gladly give my heart’s blood at this moment, to discover that the past was

but a horrid dream, and that now, as in years gone by, I could without fear, that the very air would repeat the words in mocking echo, sign myself,

“ Your affectionate brother,

“ EUSTACE TREVOR.”

CHAPTER XXV.

There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune ;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.
On such a full sea are we now afloat ;
And we must take the current when it serves,
Or lose our ventures.

SHAKESPEARE.

It is not necessary to describe with much detail the effect produced by this letter, on the mind of Eustace Trevor, or the mode of conduct he pursued in the emergency.

We have already made the reader acquainted with the half measures he pursued—the crooked paths he attempted, in order to extricate himself from the threefold difficulty in which he found himself placed. His answer in the first instance, to his brother's first startling address, had been of that character which

usually marks the tone of the offender, when the injured one dares to rise up and interfere with his ill-deserved security, and ill-earned joys ; but though in language fierce and vindictive, he might appear to set fear and threatening at defiance, there was too much implied acquiescence, in the power these threats exercised over his mind—in the testy assurance which accompanied his reply (how far true we have seen) that his marriage was not in any such immediate question as Eustace seemed to imagine—that his father's state of health rendered it an affair of most uncertain termination—till finally, a second letter from his brother, brought him, at last, to declare in terms, the bitterness of which may be well imagined, that he had put off his marriage *sine die*, in further proof of which, he was to hold no further communication by person or letter with Mary Seaham ;—he then hoped that Eustace might be satisfied, and that he would have left England.

That he might prevail on Mary to consent to a private marriage, was now probably the object of Eugene's mind. For to relinquish, without a struggle, any acquisition on which he had

set his heart, would have been contrary to his nature ; and then there was the probability of his father's death, securing to him so large a provision, rendering him in a pecuniary point of view, independent of any threats his brother might please to put into execution ; for as far as Mary was concerned, he relied too much on the power he had gained over her devoted, gentle affections, to fear that any accusation brought against him by his brother, would influence her against him. Eustace might then claim his own rights, and he would not dispute them. Nay, Mary once his own, he reckoned too much on that brother's, (in his heart, acknowledged generosity of spirit,) to fear that he would persevere in carrying out his threatened, and in that case, unavailing exposure. It was in this light, probably, that he viewed the case, when Eugene first came to London. Eustace, too, we find, had not left town. Either he had been led to doubt the truth of his brother's protestations, or was unable to resist the temptation of lingering where Mary was, when he could again, and for the last time, perhaps, hope to catch a passing glance of her sweet face, —pale, sad, and changed, since he had last seen

it—but better thus to his mind, than bright and glowing with that dangerous infatuation by which she was to be allured to certain misery.

We will not deny that Eustace Trevor's feelings and course of conduct on the occasion, may seem carried to a morbid, some may almost deem, an unwarrantable excess. But then it must be remembered, that all his lifetime through,

“From mighty wrong to petty perfidy ;”

he had suffered enough to bring any man of his sensitively high-pitched tone of mind to this extremity.

There was one point especially, which had become the ruling power of his mind—that phantom which by night or day—haunted his imagination. The remembrance of his mother : her wrongs and misery.

“A potent spell, a mighty talisman,
The imperishable memory of the dead,
Sustained by love, and grief, and indignation,
So vivid were the forms within his brain,
His very eyes, when shut, made pictures of them.”

Could he then image forth another? She

who had filled up that yearning vacuum in his bleeding heart, the death of his mother had occasioned; imagine her, such was the horrid fancy which had taken possession of his mind—picture Mary entering that same house—assuming that same position—the victim of the same evil influences to which she had been exposed. The thought would have been one almost to turn his brain, had he deemed it not to be averted. As it was, the suffering that its very idea had caused, was sufficient to produce that change in his appearance, on which Arthur Seaham had commented, when to gain more certain information concerning his sister, Eustace Trevor had visited him at the Temple; a change, which no former griefs and trials, dark and dreadful though they had been, had in so striking a manner been able to inflict. For man is Godlike in his strength—his spirit may sustain him under burdens it were otherwise difficult to bear—but touch only a chord—break only a tie which binds him to a woman's delicate love,

“And his strong spirit bendeth like a reed.”

On Eustace's return from the visit to the

Temple, he had proof positive of his brother not having kept his pledge, in one most important respect ; for he saw the lovers together, and the painful interview between the brothers was the consequence—the issue of which we need not recapitulate.

Another day, and Eustace Trevor had turned his back upon the English shore, to track the footsteps of his friend Mr. Wynne in his travels on the continent, still retaining the assumed name of Temple ; and Eugene in as short a space of time, was again breathing freely his accustomed atmosphere—a London world.

We do not mean to say that his love for Mary Seaham was so soon forgotten—that love which for the last few months had exercised a purer and more softening influence upon his spirits, than any other feeling, perhaps, had ever before effected.

It was still like some soft, sweet, dream of night, which often haunts and mingles in the thoughts and actions of the day ; and his marriage with the gentle Mary, the settled purpose and intention of his heart.

But the smooth course of that love had re-

ceived a check—met with a disturbing force—his love had not quality or strength to overstep.

This to a worldling is a dangerous test; for love to him is but “a thing apart.” There are so many other resources wherefrom to drain, when that one silvery stream of life is checked or troubled.

Why then not plunge into these broad abounding waters, which will bear him on, no matter how turbid be their depth beneath the glittering surface—no matter where, but on only—on too smooth, open, too unrestrained a course. As to the stability of his feelings with regard to Mary, Eugene felt little doubt his affections had been called forth to an unprecedented degree. For the first time in his life, he felt what it was to have his desires fixed on an object, in every way worthy of esteem.

“Pure, lovely, and of good report,”

and a new and wonderful fascination had been the effect produced upon his mind. Whilst under its immediate influence, he had seemed to exist in another sphere, to breathe another atmosphere, to have become a new creature;

and he had contemplated his marriage with a calm, tranquil delight, as the completion of a still more certain renovation and transformation of his existence.

Its untoward interruption, therefore, had provoked and disappointed him beyond measure—beyond even the fear and inconvenience of those serious consequences into which the circumstances of the case had otherwise threatened him. Irritated and embarrassed by the trouble and perplexity in which the affair involved him, we will not say, however, but that in the end this one year's certain postponement of his marriage, as decided in his interview with Arthur Seaham, had not in a great degree relieved his mind in the emergency. In one year, as he had said, much might happen to change the aspect of affairs. At any rate breathing time was afforded, in which he might, without danger to himself, indulge in the consciousness of knowing that a tender heart was all his own. For the sequel time would provide.

In the meantime what had he to do, but to pursue his former career, and hush the voice of conscience in the excitement of the crowd.

“To follow all that peace disdains to seek,
Where revel calls, and laughter vainly loud,
False to the heart, distorts the hollow cheek,
And leave the flagging spirits still more weak.”

That the mind of man need indeed be more
than human to withstand such counter-influences
has been well tested.

“Amidst such scenes, love’s flower too soon is blighted.”

* * * *

What different courses marked the existence of
Mary Seaham and Eugene Trevor, during the
lengthened interval which is to follow, may
easily be imagined—different as the streamlet’s
course through the quiet valley, to the river’s,
rolling its darkened waters through the streets
tumultuous of defiling cities !

Let us then, now that our less pleasing task
is accomplished, restrain our footsteps as much
as possible to the streamlet’s course ; that is to
say, in the ensuing pages, let us follow more
closely Mary Seaham’s career than that of her
lover’s.

“Not through each devious path, each changeful year
of existence,

But as a traveller follows a streamlet’s course through
the valley :

Far from its margin at times, and seeing the gleam
of its water
Here and there, in some open space, and at intervals
only ;
Then drawing nearer its banks, through sylvan glooms
that conceal it,
Though he behold it not, he can hear its continuous
murmur,
Happy at length if he find the spot when it reaches
an outlet."

END OF VOL. II.

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MARY SEAHAM.

A NOVEL.

BY MRS. GREY,
AUTHOR OF "THE GAMBLER'S WIFE,"
&c. &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.
VOL. III.

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MARY SEAHAM.

CHAPTER I.

Thou hast not rebuked, nor reproached me,
But sadly and silently wept,
And each wound that to try thee I sent thee,
Thou took'st to thy heart to be kept.

C. CAMPBELL.

Six months from the point at which we left our story, a party of gentlemen; who on their way to the Highland Moors, had stopped in Edinburgh for the night, strolled together in the public gardens of the place.

They found little company there besides children and nurse-maids at that time, so that a young lady of quiet, but distinguished

appearance, who came towards them and turned down one of the shady walks, with a group of little companions followed by their attendant, more particularly attracted the attention of the strangers.

"What a remarkably pretty, lady-like looking girl, that is; how well she walks," said one.

"So Trevor seems to think," said another, for their friend had lingered behind, and now stood apparently half irresolute, looking in the direction where the young lady had disappeared.

"Come on, don't let us be in his way," and then laughing, they pursued their walk.

Trevor seemed not disinclined to profit by their consideration—he hesitated no longer, but disappeared at once within the shaded path.

Need we say, whose footsteps he followed—or whose the startled countenance, which turned towards him, when having reached the spot where the object of his pursuit had arrived, he in a low tone pronounced the name of "Mary," or how in an opposite direction to

that taken by the nurse and children, they were soon walking on slowly, side by side, together.

“ But Eugene, is not this wrong ?” Mary said, after the first tearful joy of this most unexpected meeting had a little subsided, and her heart rather sunk, to find by her lover’s hasty explanation, that no new turn of events, touching favourably on their mutual happiness, had brought him to her side. “ Is not this wrong after the agreement we had made ?”

“ What Mary !” with tender reproach, “ are you so little glad to see me as thus to speak ? However, as you are so much more scrupulous than affectionate, I am not afraid to tell you that I had not counted upon this pleasure, though I did not think myself bound quite to avoid the place which contained you ; but when, by mere accident, I saw you a few yards distant, I think not the most punctilious of your friends, would expect it to be in the nature of man, to look after you and turn coolly the other way.”

Mary smiled upon him, as if she needed no other excuse.

"How well you look, Mary!" Eugene continued, gazing on the countenance of his companion, lit up, as it was, by the glow of animated pleasure, "happier, better, than when I saw you last—too well, I am almost tempted to think, and too happy, considering the circumstances of our case. I—you must allow, look far less so."

Mary gazed with tender anxiety into her lover's face. Was she then really to suppose that the change she remarked upon his handsome countenance, since the happy Silverton days, was caused by his love for her?

The haggard cheek—the restless, unhealthful fire which burnt in those dark eyes! A thrill of womanly pleasure was mixed with the tender pain the idea inspired.

"You certainly do not look as well as when at Silverton," she answered with a gentle sigh, as the many associations those words conjured up, rose before her; "but your expedition to the Moors will do you so much good. If

you have been in London all this time, I do not wonder at your feeling ill. As for my looks," she added, "no doubt at this moment they are bright and happy—you must not judge of them in general from their appearance now, not that I mean to say I am not happier, and perhaps therefore looking better than when you saw me last—for then—all was doubt, and dread, and uncertainty, and I was very miserable—but now since all that was removed, I have been happy—yes, truly happy in comparison; though at times I fear I am inclined to be sad and impatient-hearted. I was spoilt at first by too much unalloyed happiness, and it is hard to resign oneself to the long and unbroken separation, I had thought ours must be, but there is the happy prospect at the end—and this year, long and weary as it may seem—must pass away like any other."

"This year—yes!" murmured Eugene abstractedly, gazing on the sweet earnest countenance of the good and gentle speaker—"yes, this year," he repeated with an impatient flash suddenly lighting up his eyes; "but you

should have been my wife now, Mary," and lowering his voice, "you *would* have been, if you had loved me, as I thought you did, and had not cut so short what I proposed doing during that drive in London."

Mary looked startled and surprised.

"Eugene!" she said, "I know you do not mean what you say—you never, but in the madness and misery of the moment, could have suggested such an alternative."

"Why not, dear Mary?"

"Why?" with gentle reproach. "Why—for every reason, Eugene."

"Every one is not so scrupulous as yourself, Mary. Olivia thought it a great pity we did not avail ourselves of that expedient; she would have assisted us in every way."

"What, Eugene—you really went so far as to consult with a third person, on such a subject."

"Oh! Olivia and I, you know, are sworn allies; besides, I believe it was she who suggested the idea. Ladies are always the first

to originate mischievous designs in our unlucky brains."

Mary shook her head.

"Olivia was very wrong," she said; "she must have known that *I* should never have consented to such an alternative."

"She only knew, or thought at least, that you loved me; and therefore, as with all her faults, she has a warm heart; she could not probably conceive such coldness in your love, Mary."

The tears rose to Mary's eyes.

"Coldness!" she repeated. "Oh, Eugene! how can you apply such a term to my affection?—coldness in rejecting an expedient which I should think the most extreme, and peculiar circumstances alone could justify."

"To what kind of circumstances do you allude, Mary?" Eugene inquired anxiously, and with recovered tenderness of tone, and manner.

"Nothing fortunately, dear Eugene, which can in any manner apply to our case; we who have only need of a little patience for our path

to be clear and plain before us. This year over, and if all goes right, you will not, I think, accuse me any more of having acted coldly in this respect."

"No, Mary, as you say—if all goes right, it will be as well; but supposing that at the end of this year—for, remember that time was specified quite at random, and because I had no heart to name a longer period—supposing that the existing obstacle was unremoved, and that another, and another, and another year were to pass before it were possible we could be openly united—"

"Oh, Eugene!" interposed poor Mary, turning very pale; "and is this really likely to be the case?"

"I did not say it was likely—but it is possible—and suppose it so to be?"

He paused for her reply, and still she answered faintly:

"Oh, then, Eugene, the trial would be great, yet we must still trust in God, and abide patiently his good time and pleasure."

"Mary," interrupted Eugene, almost pas-

sionately, "your patience indeed exceeds all bounds," and he turned petulantly away.

Poor Mary was cut to the heart by this first manifestation of anything, but the most tender approval on Trevor's part; she exclaimed:

"Oh, Eugene! what would you have me to do?" and the tempter was determined not to throw away the advantage he had thus far gained.

His present object, as may be supposed, was not to have any immediate recourse to the expedient he was advancing, but rather to smooth the way, in case of further exigency. For again with Mary—once more looking on her sweet face—listening to her gentle voice, and feeling the magic charm her guileless excellency never failed to exercise over him, he was as much in love as ever, and determined, whatever might happen, never to be foiled in his endeavours to possess a treasure, whose price he felt, would indeed be "far above rubies."

Nay, he even began to think that he had

perhaps been too easily turned from his original design, and was almost ready to accuse himself of weakness and cowardice ; therefore to Mary's question, he replied still somewhat coldly.

"I would have you show that you really loved me, by consenting to a step which might, under certain circumstances, be the only means of securing our final happiness. *My* happiness—that is to say—and your's," he added softly. "I had hoped, dearest Mary, you would also have considered it."

"My happiness, indeed, Eugene ; but still deceit of any kind to me is so very repugnant, even in idea, that I scarcely know how I should ever be able to *enact* it—deceit too of such a grave and responsible character—enacted against those dearest to me. What a return for their affectionate and anxious regard for my welfare !"

"Yes," answered Eugene, somewhat hurriedly, "that tormenting point about money matters, and a few more directly touching myself. But I am unwise, perhaps, in so

committing myself," he added again coldly. "Your love of *truth*, which do not fancy I cannot thoroughly appreciate, may also force you to communicate all that has now passed between us to your friends and relations."

"Eugene, you are unkind," poor Mary murmured, in accents of wounded affection.

He took her hand, pressing it to his lips in a manner which expressed the tenderest, humblest sorrow—and the ready tearful smile told him he was too easily forgiven.

"What sort of a man is this brother-in-law of yours, Mary?" Eugene then asked.

"A very kind good man," Mary answered. "I am sure, *I* ought to say so."

"And your sister?"

"She is my sister, and therefore when I tell you that she is in my eyes perfection, you will indeed think me partial."

"And you are then altogether perfectly happy," with renewed pique.

This time she only answered him with a glance, her heart too full for words.

"Forgive me, dearest, if I am jealous,"

Eugene exclaimed, again appeased, "of every one, even your own sister ; but I shall be thankful indeed to have no further excuse for the indulgence of that feeling. Oh ! Mary, I have often cruel misgivings respecting you."

"Respecting *me*, Eugene?"

"Yes, lest by any means you should during our separation be induced to love, nay, even the idea that you should be *loved* by any one save myself, is almost to me as repugnant."

"What can you mean, Eugene?" turning her eyes upon him, with doubting surprise ; "*I* love any one, you cannot be in earnest—as to any one loving me."

"Well, do you think that so very much out of the question—Mr. Temple for instance?"

These last words were spoken in a faltering, agitated voice, the speaker's countenance undergoing a strange, a most unpleasing change, whilst an ashy paleness spread over it, his eyes, in which glared a sinister expression, fixed upon the clear open countenance of Mary, who that moment was pensively looking down, or indeed

she might well have been startled at the new light which shone from her lover's face.

"Mr. Temple!" she repeated slowly, and sadly "ah, yes!" with a thoughtful sigh, "but surely, Eugene, I satisfied you fully on that point, when I told you I refused him."

"Yes, I know," but in a quick suspicious tone, "why did you sigh when you repeated that man's name?"

"Did I sigh?"

"To be sure, you did; Mary, pray do not let me imagine that you repent—that for a moment you have ever regretted you refused that—man, the idea would distract me."

"Eugene, Eugene! you are very strange to-day," replied the astonished girl, "how is it possible that I could have regretted it, when so soon after I met you—and now—"

Her soft glance finished the sentence, and seemed to express that now such an idea would indeed be madness. Eugene pressed her arm grateful for this soothing assurance, but still seemed not perfectly satisfied.


"And supposing even that you had *not* met

with me so soon after," he persisted, "you never *would* have regretted this act of yours? Mary, you do not answer. Is it possible," turning almost fiercely towards her, "that on second thoughts, on mature consideration, you ever could have consented to marry that man?"

Mary's spirit, like that of many persons of her gentle disposition, could be roused by any such unjust or unreasonable display of temper, and she answered calmly :

"Most people would have wondered how it were possible, I refrained from loving that excellent, that delightful man, who for four long years I had daily seen in the exercise of every good and beneficial work, and of whose amiable and exalted character, I had such full opportunity of judging. It must indeed have been one of the inscrutable ways of Providence, which preserved my heart all whole and entire for you, Eugene."

But the affectionate glance she lifted up towards her lover, was met by one so dark and sinister in its expression, that she started and shrank, as at the same moment, with an impe-



tuous, almost violent movement, her arm was released by her companion.

"This is too much," he muttered angrily, "if I am to stay here only to have rang in my ear the praises of this Temple, as he calls himself, I think it is time that I should be off."

Poor Mary, after one moment's astounded silence, placed her gentle hand tremulously on his arm.

"Eugene!" she faltered, "do not I entreat you look or speak like that, you distress, you terrify me, and really this anger on your part is so unaccountable, so uncalled for, I cannot understand it."

"Not understand it, Mary? Not understand why I should hate to hear you eulogize and wonder at your not having been inclined to marry that detested man? Why I shall next be hearing you wondering what ever made you love me."

Incautious suggestion—why indeed had she loved him? What if Mary, in after hours, when thinking over this scene, should recall that question for cooler discussion, and diving into

the recesses of her reasonable soul for its solution, bring forth no more definite response than the reiteration of the question. Why indeed?

Why are we ever inclined to choose the evil and reject the good? Why do we ever love darkness better than light? Why are our eyes blinded, our imagination diseased, our taste perverted, and our heart deceived?

But not now did Mary meditate upon this mystery, she only meekly and tearfully exclaimed against any such imputation.

"Why I love you, Eugene? alas! I begin almost to think you never loved me, or you would not surely distress me by such words and expressions. Mr. Temple—"

"Mary, do not speak that hated name again."

"I will not; too gladly will I avoid a subject which makes you so unlike yourself, but remember, Eugene, it was you who first began it, for it is one I should never have resumed. Mr. Temple," she repeated more firmly, "however I may honour his memory, is as one henceforth dead to me; he has for some time left the

country, and it is not probable that I shall ever see him again in this world."

"So be it!" again murmured Eugene through his closed teeth, but added, perceiving probably as his heated spirit cooled, that his violence on this subject was making too much impression on his companion.

"I have indeed perhaps been exciting myself to an unreasonable extent, but I do not know how it is, there was always something from the first, that from what you told me of this Mr. Temple gave me a disagreeable impression, something about him which seemed mysterious, underhand and suspicious."

Mary's voice was about to be raised in indignant refutation of a charge so unfounded, but cautious prudence checked the ebullition which might only have led to fresh irritation on Eugene's part, but, as bright as noontide, open as the day, there flashed before her memory those clear dark eyes, the glance, the countenance of that aspersed one, it must have been a dangerous crisis, for him who had spoken the injurious idea, with such side-

long glance and downcast averted countenance.

Mary's forbearance seemed nevertheless to have restored her companion's equanimity. He was in a moment all affectionate contrition, and Mary all forgiving kindness—still more gratifying Eugene's *exigence* by comparing the unbroken monotony of her present existence with his own exciting career ; and telling him how much more there was, therefore, on her side to call forth misgivings on his account, yet how her perfect trust, her entire faith sustained her.

"I am as happy indeed," she continued calmly, "as I can be under present circumstances. I might have preferred perhaps being with my dear brother, but my friends thought that would not quite do at present."

Eugene's brow darkened. He had no great fancy just now for that "dear brother."

"Yes—yes," he said somewhat hastily, "I quite agree with them, you are certainly better where you are, just now ; he is too young,

and your sister no doubt is, as you say, a delightful person."

"She is indeed," Mary answered with alacrity, "I wish you could know her Eugene. Is it not possible?" Then remembering the circumstances of their meeting she hesitated, and paused dejectedly.

"It seems so strange and unnatural to me," she added, "that none of those I love so well should have ever seen or known you—none but Arthur," she added in a low tone.

There was nothing very agreeable associated in Eugene Trevor's mind at this moment, with the later circumstances of that acquaintance, though he hastened to express slightly his own corresponding regret; however the truth was, as may be imagined, that he felt little inclination at this juncture for an encounter with any of his betrothed's belongings, more especially the dry Scotch lawyer—imagination pictured to him.

If, indeed, it had not been for the nurse and children, he would probably have suggested that Mary should keep silence on the subject

of their interview; but as it was, he could only resign the affair into her hands, and rely upon her representation of the circumstance.

He must now think of beating a retreat; but first of all he asked her how long she was to remain in her present abode.

She scarcely knew—probably all the winter.

“And am I never to hear from you, or of you, all this time?” he demanded.

She shook her head sadly.

“I do not know Eugene how—your agreement was you remember, that we should not meet, or even write, to one another.”

“Do you and Olivia correspond?” Eugene then asked.

“Seldom: Olivia lately has been a very bad correspondent.”

“No wonder; she has had other things to think of lately. She has been going on at a fine rate this season in London, nearly driven Louis mad. At last he took the children down to Silvertown, and left her behind.”

"Poor dear Louis !" murmured Mary, with sorrowful concern.

"Yes, Mary, you and I would have been very different."

At those words, into which were thrown a most thrilling amount of tenderness, both of look and accent, Eugene paused.

They had hitherto been pacing slowly up and down a certain part of the retired grounds, but now pressing his companion's arm close to his heart, he said in an agitated voice.

"And now, Mary, how shall I ever make up my mind to leave you ; and how shall I exist without you ?"

Mary had just lifted up her pale face with a look of piteous sorrow, at words which she felt at once were preliminaries to the bitter parting, when their attention was attracted by the voices of her sister's children, announcing them to have advanced in closer proximity than the discreet tact of their attendant had previously permitted. But on glancing in that direction, Eugene was not a little dis-

concerted to behold slowly advancing amongst the young group, a lady whom it needed not Mary's murmured explanation to denote to him at once as her sister.

There was nothing to do but for them to advance and meet one another. Mary's former pallor had been speedily chased by a deep blush, and with nervous embarrassment she murmured an introduction.

Eugene's manner too was consciously confused.

Mrs. Gillespie, whatever might have been the surprise and interest she felt on finding her sister so accompanied, was all calm and quiet civility, such as that with which she might have received any strange acquaintance of Mary's.

And Eugene—ominous as this cool reception might appear of the feeling generally entertained by the family of Mary towards him—could not but hail it as a relief to the embarrassment of his present situation, and consider the course of conduct she thus pursued, that of a lady-like and sensible person such, as he could

at once perceive in their short interview, his sister-in-law elect to be.

So they walked down the shady walk together: Mary anxious and silent, Mrs. Gillespie and Eugene exchanging commonplace observations respecting Edinburgh, and his intended expedition to the Moors.

Then the lady paused, as if intending to show that she purposed proceeding in a different direction to that of her new companion. And, understanding the hint, Eugene Trevor turned, and taking Mary's hand pressed it as fondly, and gazed into her pale face as significantly as he dared, murmured a few incoherent syllables of parting, then bowed to the sister, and departed.

CHAPTER II.

Tell us, maiden, hast thou found him
Thus delicious, thus divine ?
Doth such witchery breathe around him ?
Is his spirit so benign ?
Doth he shed o'er heart and brain
More of pleasure or of pain ?

MOULTRIE.

MARY suffered Mrs. Gillespie to draw her arm affectionately within her own, and the sisters then walked on a little way, in silence, which Alice was the first to break.

"And that then was Eugene Trevor, Mary?" she said half interrogatively, half in soliloquy.

"Yes, that was Eugene," was the answer, accompanied by a deep-drawn sigh.

But there had been something in Mrs. Gillespie's tone which caused her at the same

moment to turn her eyes anxiously upon her face, as if to discover what impression the "Eugene Trevor," thus significantly emphasized, had made upon the speaker.

"Is he like what you expected?" she then timidly inquired.

"Yes—no—that is to say, not exactly," was the sister's rather hesitating reply.

"He is looking ill now," Mary continued; "and you did not see him to advantage. It was of course rather an embarrassing meeting for him, under existing circumstances, he not knowing exactly how you might be inclined to approve of our interview, just at present; but I should think from it having been so perfectly accidental, no one could blame him, or object to its having occurred."

"Not in the least, dear Mary, I am sure— if it was a meeting calculated to raise and strengthen your spirits. And it *has* made you happier, I hope," looking rather doubtfully into Mary's pale and anxious countenance, on which too the traces of tears were plainly visible.

"Oh, yes, Alice !" Mary faintly replied. "Seeing Eugene was, indeed, a pleasure most welcome and unexpected ; but then you know the parting again for so long a time—and—and—" turning her head away with a sigh, "altogether it might be called rather a painful pleasure."

"But then, Mary, six months will so soon pass away."

"Yes, certainly," hesitated Mary ; but there was no very cheerful security in her tone.

Mrs. Gillespie did not press her sister further on the subject just then, for she plainly perceived that altogether it was one in which truly as much of pain as pleasure was commingled. Of course she informed her husband of the occurrence ; and Mary too spoke of it as openly as was possible, though the reserve she was forced in a great measure to maintain respecting the substance of the interview, the more confirmed her relations in their suspicions, as to its having been one of no very satisfactory nature.

"And what, as far as you were able to

judge, in so short a time, did you think of your intended brother-in-law, my dear Alice?" the husband inquired of his wife the evening after the meeting; "for I know you consider yourself a first rate physiognomist."

"What do I think of him Robert?"—with a sigh—"poor Mary."

"Why, poor Mary, do you not like his appearance?"

"I should not much *like* to trust my happiness, or that of any one I loved, to his keeping."

"Indeed! he is very good-looking at any rate."

"Yes, handsome certainly—eyes, such as you perhaps have seldom, if ever seen, and which, if they would only look you full in the face, are certainly calculated to do a great deal of execution. But he did not look so into mine; and there was something about his countenance altogether which I cannot explain—something which, though I can fancy it well calculated to make an impression—of some sort or another, over one's mind—I confess

on mine—to have been one, which is far from *canny*. His looks too bespeak him, I am afraid, to be suffering rather from the jading effects of London dissipation, than the gentler pains and anxieties attendant on his situation, as a lover separated from the object of his affection.”

Mr. Gillespie looked concerned at this report, feeling a great interest in his amiable young sister-in-law. And though he generally expressed mistrust, with respect to his wife's too hasty reliance on her first impressions, still he was often in the end forced to acknowledge their frequent accuracy.

Yet at the same time, as the countenance of the lover did not in any way alter the case with regard to Mary's position or circumstances, there was nothing to be said or done by her friends whilst awaiting the issue of affairs, but to observe with regret that though with the same meek “patience, abnegation of self, and devotion to others,” their sister pursued the even tenor of her way, the cheerful serenity which before had continued to shine forth in her countenance, and characterize her bearing,

had departed. Her mind had been evidently unsettled by the *rencontre* with Eugene Trevor—her heart's calm rest disturbed.

How was it indeed with Mary? Had the hints conveyed by Eugene during their interview depressed her hopes, and re-awakened her misgivings as to the happy issue of the year's probation? Or more bitter still—had anything in that same interview occurred to give that first disenchanting touch, which by degrees detracts from the perfect charm which has hitherto robed our idol, and we see the image of goodness and beauty, whose idol shape we worshipped, melting from our sight, and though still it binds the fatal spell, and still it draws us on, the spirit of our love is changed—a shadow has fallen upon it. We feel it to be “of the earth earthy.”

Had Mary received any startling impression, her feelings any *bouleversement*, by beholding Eugene Trevor for the first time so unlike the Eugene she had hitherto loved—under the irritating disturbing influences of opposition and reverse.

But from whatever cause they might proceed, certainly "the gloom and the shadow" spread broader and deeper on her brow; and when on his return from the Moors, Eugene Trevor, probably for the chance of another interview, revisited the Scotch metropolis, he learnt, by particular inquiry of a maid-servant he found standing by the door of Mr. Gillespie's closed house, that the family had left Edinburgh, and gone to the sea-side.

"Were they all well?" he inquired.

"All well, only the young lady, Mrs. Gillespie's sister, a little pale, and pining for country air. So the young Maister Arthur had come, and persuaded them to put up their gear, and take the bairns and all to the sea; but the maister was expected home the morrow, if the gentleman liked to step up and see him."

We may imagine that Trevor had no inclination to tarry for this purpose, and that same day left Scotland *en route* for Montrevor.

CHAPTER III.

He glowed with a spirit pure and high,
They called the feeling madness,
And he wept for woe with a melting eye,
'Twas weak and moody sadness.

PERCIVAL.

It was Epsom week. London was all astir with the influx of company returning from the races.

A pale girl sat alone in one of the apartments of an hotel in Brook Street, listening long and anxiously to the coming sounds of the carriage-wheels, as they whirled along in that direction.

At length a carriage stopped before the door, and in a few moments a lady entered the room, whose showy costume and flushed excited countenance, (forming so strong a contrast to the appearance of the other, whom she warmly

greeted,) plainly evinced her to have but just returned from that gay resort, the Stand at Epsom.

“ You are come then, dear Mary. I hope you have not been very long waiting.”

“ No, not so very long,” and the eyes of the speaker wandered anxiously towards the door, as if she seemed to expect the appearance of a second person.

Mrs. de Burgh understood that glance too well—she shook her head compassionately.

“ Alas!—no, dear Mary; you must not expect to see him just now; he has been unfortunately prevented—that was the reason which made me so late; but I will tell you all about it presently, only let me have a glass of wine first, for I am nearly exhausted.”

And during the interval of suspense, whilst Mrs. de Burgh refreshed herself after the fatiguing pleasures of the day, let us remind our readers, that the momentous year had some little time ago drawn to a close. Its expiration had not, however, brought with it, any immediate results.

Nothing had been seen or heard of Eugene Trevor by any of the family for the first month or two. He had been in London only at intervals, and he had not opened any communication with his *fiancée*, till she—on coming to London at the urgent solicitation of her sister Lady Morgan, who was not well—had a few days after her arrival, been surprised by a note from Mrs. de Burgh, whom she was not aware was even in town, begging her to come to her—naming a particular day—at the hotel where she was staying—as Eugene Trevor wished particularly to see her. She added that he would be obliged by her not mentioning the object of this visit to her relations, lest by any chance they might interfere with the interview, and it was very necessary that it should occur, before any more general communication took place.

“Still mystery and concealment!” was poor Mary’s disappointed soliloquy. “Why not come here openly and see and speak to me? But I will go this once, as Eugene wishes it, and I cannot refuse perhaps without occasioning trouble and confusion.”

And so she went ; for still alas ! the attractive chain too powerfully bound her, and her heart could not but spring forward with yearning hope to this meeting once again, with her intended. It may be imagined, therefore, how her heart had sunk within her, at Mrs. de Burgh's disappointing communication.

" Prevented coming," after having had her hopes and expectations strained to such a pitch—and she awaited with painful solicitude the promised explanation.

She had not seen her cousin since her last unhappy time in London, and though, even then, to a certain degree, a kind of estrangement had risen up between them ; and all that she had since heard by report of the gay wife's conduct and proceedings, had not greatly raised the beautiful Olivia in her esteem, yet Mary could not but retain a grateful remembrance of the warm-hearted kindness she had received whilst under her roof—and a still more pleasing and vivid impression of the too tenderly cherished associations, with which she was so intimately connected.

But at this moment, the dearest friend on earth would have only been appreciated by Mary, as the being on whose lips she hung for information on the subject, and which she alone at this moment had the power to communicate; and “why had not Eugene come?” was all that spoke in her anxious countenance, or in the faltering tone in which she attempted, with some show of cousinly interest, to make a few inquiries after Louis and the children.

Mrs. de Burgh came at last to her relief—if relief it could be called—for the first thing she heard was, that Eugene instead of coming to see her, intended setting off for Montrevor that very evening.

“And why?” Mary with quivering lips interrupted.

“Having lost a large sum of money on the Derby, he was obliged to have immediate recourse to his father for the necessary cash to cover this unfortunate transaction. He has therefore commissioned me to break to you this intelligence. I cannot tell you, my dear Mary, the state of mind poor Eugene was in when we parted—

not only on account of the immediate disappointment this occasioned him ; but because this enormous loss must again retard the possibility of his marriage taking place at present. My dear Mary, you are doomed to the trial of hope deferred—the strength and constancy of your attachment has indeed been sorely taxed.”

Mary did not immediately reply. She sat very pale, her eyes fixed upon the ground, something more than common disappointment expressed in her thoughtful countenance.

At length she looked up, and said in a grave and anxious tone :

“ Does Eugene always lose like this at races ?”

“ Oh no, dear ! fortunately,” laughed Mrs. de Burgh, “ not often ; he is very lucky in general,” but checking herself, as she saw Mary’s shocked countenance, “ I mean,” and she hesitated, “ that after all he has not so very decided a taste for this sort of thing,” and Mrs. de Burgh laughed again, saying : “ but, my dear girl, do not look so very serious upon the subject, what is there so very shocking in it after all.”

Mary thought it was a subject, to her at least, of most serious importance and concern. A new and uncomfortable misgiving began to arise in her mind.

Was it in any way relating to this propensity in Eugene Trévor, against which Louis de Burgh originally warned her—and did it in reality—more than the reason which Eugene had brought forth to her brother, tend to interfere in any way with her happiness? So strongly did this idea suddenly possess her, that she could not refrain from asking Mrs. de Burgh whether she thought this was the case. Her cousin's evasive answer did not tend much to the removal of her suspicions.

Eugene certainly did play—did bet a little on the turf. She thought Mary had always been aware of that—men must have some pursuit, some excitement. If it were not one thing it was another—equally—perhaps one might call it—"not quite right;" however, all the best men in London were on the turf. Eugene was only like the rest, but with married men, it was quite different.

"Indeed, Mary," the fair lady continued, "Eugene always assures me, he means to give up everything of the sort when he marries, and I am quite sure he will do so. I only wish you were married, dear."

Mary only sighed.

"You are not getting weary of your engagement, Mary?" Mrs. de Burgh inquired.

"Weary!—oh, no, Olivia. I was sighing for Eugene's sake."

"You may well do so, for he is, I assure you, very unhappy at all this delay."

Mary shook her head, and her lip curled a little disdainfully. The gesture seemed to say, "Whose fault is it now?"

Mrs. de Burgh seemed to understand it as such, for she said—

"It is all that miserly old father's fault. He could set everything right at once, if he chose."

"But," said Mary, in a low tone, "I see no end of all this."

"No," hesitated Mrs. de Burgh, "not I suppose till the brother turns up; unless, indeed—" she murmured.

"What?" inquired Mary, anxiously."

"You had better come and stay with me at Silverton," was Mrs. de Burgh's indirect reply.

Mary smiled dejectedly.

"That would never do," she replied, "they would not consent to my doing so, under present circumstances."

"They—who are they? I am sure, Mary, I should not allow any brother or sister to interfere with my proceedings. You are of age, and quite at liberty, I should imagine, to act as you please on any subject."

Mary shook her head. She did not feel quite so independent-spirited as all that—and besides, she did not herself see that such a step would be quite expedient at present.

She did not, however, say this aloud, and Mrs. de Burgh attributed her silence to yielding consent.

"Eugene wishes it very much I can assure you."

Mary looked up as if the tempter himself had murmured the insinuating observation in her ear,

for there was something significant in the way Mrs. de Burgh had spoken, which she could not but understand, and still more in the words which followed.

"If you were only married to Eugene, Mary, you might rely on his giving up all objectionable and hurtful things."

"But as that cannot be," sighed Mary, despondingly.

"It could," hesitated Mrs. de Burgh; "it is only your friends' opposition which would stand in the way, until Eugene is able to settle something satisfactory as to his future prospects. Were I you, Mary, if it were only for Eugene's sake, I should not be so scrupulous about securing each other's happiness and his welfare, as he tells me you are."

But Mary turned away almost indignantly. If the proposal had even revolted her spirit when coming from Eugene's own lips, much more so, did it grate upon her feelings, when thus insinuated by those of another.

But whatever might here have ensued, was interrupted by the entrance of Mr. de Burgh.

It seemed that he had only arrived in London that day, unexpectedly to Mrs. de Burgh, who otherwise would not have planned the meeting of Mary and Eugene.

He came evidently in one of his London humours, as his wife called it; and though he greeted Mary kindly, she fancied there was a certain alteration in his manner towards her, which she instinctively felt to originate in his disapprovement of the present circumstances of her engagement; she remembered that he never was friendly to the affair, though the direct subject was now avoided by each of the party.

He sat and made captious and cutting allusions to the races, and every one concerned therein, which, whether really intended at Eugene, Mary interpreted as such—and they touched the poor girl to the quick.

Probably she was not far wrong in her supposition as to the pointedness of his remarks, for suddenly glancing on his listener's downcast anxious countenance he exclaimed, addressing his wife:

"Bye the bye, Olivia, I mean to be off abroad in a day or two."

"Good Heavens, Louis! what new fancy is this?"

"Why, I have heard something to-day which has really put me quite into a fever."

"Well, what is it? Some nonsense, I dare say."

"I at least do not think it so. Dawson, who I saw to-day, declares that Trevor, Eustace Trevor I mean, was seen by some one not long ago in Switzerland. Yes," he continued, encouraged by Mary's glance of intense and startled interest, "he was seen with another person—the *keeper* I suppose they talk about—somewhere on the Alps."

"The Alps!—poor fellow! gone there to cool his brain, I suppose," said Mrs. de Burgh, whose countenance nevertheless had bespoke her not a little moved by this communication.

"Cool his brain!—nonsense! cool enough by this time, depend upon it."

"But does Eugene know of this?" faltered Mary.

"I suppose so," replied Mr. de Burgh, coldly.

"Impossible, Louis!" Mary exclaimed with eagerness.

"Well, perhaps so. I don't know at all," Mr. de Burgh continued. "I shouldn't be so much surprised if he did; there are a great many things which surprise me more than that, Mary; for instance you yourself—yes, you, Mary," as she lifted up her eyes to her cousin's handsome face, with quiet surprise, "that you should see things in a light so different to what I should have expected from you."

"Ridiculous!" interposed Mrs. de Burgh—"that is to say that you should have expected her to have seen everything with your own jaundiced, prejudiced perception; but about Eustace Trevor."

"Yes, about Eustace Trevor; he is a subject certainly worth a little of your interest and inquiry. Mary, you should have known *him*," exclaimed Mr. de Burgh, with rising enthusiasm.

"You were very much attached to him then?" demanded Mary, with deep interest.

"Attached to him!—yes, indeed I was; that *was* a man whom one might well glory in calling friend; or," he murmured to himself, "a woman might be proud to worship as a lover."

"Yes," interposed Mrs. de Burgh, "I suppose he was a very superior, delightful person; but I own he always appeared to me, even as a boy, a little *tête monté*, so that it did not surprise me so very much when I heard of the calamity which had befallen him. He was just the sort of person upon whose mind any strong excitement, or sudden shock would have had the like effect."

"Olivia, you are talking nonsense," Mr. de Burgh petulantly exclaimed.

"It was his mother's death, I think, I heard which brought on this dreadful crisis?" Mary inquired.

"Exactly so," answered Mrs. de Burgh.

"How *do* you know?" exclaimed her husband.
"What does any one know about the matter?"

"We can only judge from what one has heard from the best authority," again persisted his wife.

"Best authority! well, I can only say that far from being of your opinion, I should have said that Eustace Trevor had been as far from madness as earth from heaven."

"Really, Louis!" exclaimed Mrs. de Burgh, perceiving Mary's look of anxious interest and surprise, "one would fancy from the way you talk that you suspected him never really to have been mad."

"And this the world called frenzy; but the wise
Have a far deeper madness, and the glance
Of melancholy is a fearful gift.
What is it but the telescope of truth,
Which brings life near in utter nakedness,
Making the cold reality more cold,"

quoted Mr. de Burgh for all reply.

"What is all this to do with the point in question?" said Mrs. de Burgh impatiently. "Really, Louis, Mary will think *you* also decidedly have gone mad."

"Mary likes poetry," he answered quietly;

"she will not think it is madness what I have uttered."

"But, Louis, what do you really mean about Eugene's brother?—tell me something about him. I have heard so very little," demanded Mary, earnestly.

"Why do you not make Eugene tell you himself? I can only say :

' He was a man, take him for all in all,
I shall not look upon his like again! ' "

"He was very handsome—very clever," said Mrs. de Burgh, taking up the theme more prosaically, "and very amiable I believe, though rather impetuous and hot-tempered; always at daggers drawn with his father, because he spent the old man's money a little faster than he liked, it is said."

"Good heavens, Olivia!" burst forth Mr. de Burgh, passionately, "how can you sit there, and distort the truth in that shameful manner? you know as well as I do the true version of this part of the story. Mary," turning to his cousin with flashing eyes, "Eustace Trevor had

a mother ; an excellent charming creature, whose existence, through the combined influence of her husband and a most baneful, pernicious wretch of a woman, that Marryott, of whom no doubt you have heard, was rendered one long tissue of wretchedness and wrong, the extent of which I believe is hardly known. Eustace, who adored his mother, keenly felt and manfully espoused her cause ; therefore, you may see at once this was the reason of his father's hatred of him, and the old man's treatment of this son, was one shameful system of injustice and tyranny—enough, I confess, to drive any man into a state of mental irritation, possessed of Eustace's sensitive temperament."

Mary's wandering, startled gaze turned inquiringly on Mrs. de Burgh, as if to ask whether this new and melancholy representation of the case could be really true. Mrs. de Burgh looked a little disconcerted, but replied carelessly :

"Yes, poor Aunt Trevor ! she had certainly a sad time of it ; but then it was partly her

own fault. She was a weak-spirited creature. What other woman would have endured what she did in that tame and passive manner ?”

“ Yes, these poor weak-spirited creatures have often, however, strength to bear a great deal for the sake of others,” replied Mr. de Burgh, sarcastically. “ It would have been more high and noble-spirited, I dare say, to have blazed abroad her domestic grievances ; but she had no doubt a little consideration for her children, and the honour and respectability of their house and name.”

“ Oh, nonsense ! that was all very well when they were children to consider them ; but when they were men, it signified very little,” said Mrs. de Burgh.

“ But *then*,” suggested Mary, with trembling earnestness, “ then she must have had great comfort in their affection and support.”

“ Yes,” answered Mr. de Burgh, in “ Eustace she had, I know, unfailing comfort and support.”

“ And Eugene ?” anxiously demanded Mary.
“ Surely he too—”

"Of course," Mrs. de Burgh hastened to exclaim, "no one could be fonder or kinder to his mother though, because"—looking angrily at her husband—"he had the sense and the discretion not to quarrel with his father, and strength of mind not to *go mad*—Louis, I suppose, wishes to make you believe that Eugene was not kind to his mother."

"Nothing would make me believe that Eugene was not kind to his mother," added Mary with an earnest energy, which showed with what indignation she would repel this distracting idea.

And Mr. de Burgh replied with great moderation :

"Nor did I say anything of the sort. *I* am not at all in the custom of asserting grave charges against a person, without certain proof. I only saw as much into 'the secrets of the prison-house' at Montrevor as would make me very sorry to have had anything further to do with its interior."

Poor Mary! She asked no more questions, she had heard quite enough to give new

and dark impressions to her mind. She saw everything in a still more bewildering and uncertain light—yet felt a vague, indefinite dread of further revelation.

Her sister's carriage being speedily announced, she bade adieu to her cousins, who were leaving London the next day, and

“Went like one that hath been stunned,
And is of sense forlorn,”

bearing in her secret soul restless doubts and blind misgivings, she shrank even from confiding to her most beloved Arthur.

CHAPTER IV.

I knew that in thy bosom dwelt
A silent grief, a hidden fear,
A sting which could be only felt
By spirits to their God most dear,
Which yet thou felt'st from year to year,
Unsoftened, nay, embitter'd still ;
And many a secret sigh and tear
Heaved thy sad heart, thine eyes did fill,
And anxious thoughts thou hadst presaging direst ill.

MOULTRIE.

THE sequel only brought forth for our heroine further disturbance and discomfort.

The newly-risen impediment to the marriage was of necessity the subject of correspondence. He again threw the blame upon his father, urging his increasing infirmities of mind and body as the excuse.

But the plea appeared to Mary's friends evasive and ambiguous, and greatly indeed was the strength and stability of her affection tried by the urgent solicitations of those so dear to her, that she would consent to break off entirely this ill-starred—and as they the more and more considered it—objectionable engagement.

But no, there was yet one still more dear to her; and to him, through good and evil report, her spirit yet must cling—

“ And stand as stands a lonely tree,
That still unbroke, though gently bent,
Still waves with fond fidelity
Its boughs above a monument.”

By letter too — for there was one crisis of affairs during which the lovers corresponded on the anxious subject, Eugene failed not to urge the maintenance of an engagement which on his part he declared he would never consent to be the first to relinquish.

Then, how could Mary cast aside an attachment, a hope which had become so linked with the happiness of her existence, that to con-

template its extinction, was to see before her extended

“Dreary and vast and silent the desert of life.”

No, rather was she content in doubt, darkness and uncertainty to wait and wander, her hope still fixed upon the distant light in the hazy future.

A position, such as that in which Mary found herself placed—an ill-defined and ambiguous matrimonial engagement—is to a young woman ever, more or less, a misfortune and a trial: something there is in her life

“Incomplete, imperfect, and unfinished,”

comprising also as it must do, much of uncertainty and restless doubt.

The circumstances of Mary's case, rendered hers more peculiarly a subject for such influences. Removed from the sphere in which her lover moved, even their correspondence, after the time just mentioned, entirely ceased; and she heard of him only at intervals—by chance and vague report.

She had longed to have those doubts and repellant ideas, Mr. de Burgh's conversation had insinuated into her mind, cleared away, as she believed they might, by Eugene's own word of mouth. But this had been denied her. She had indeed alluded to the report respecting his brother, which Mr. de Burgh had heard; but Eugene had merely said in reply, that he was taking every measure to ascertain its accuracy; and she heard nothing further on that point.

From Mrs. de Burgh she also ascertained that her cousin Louis had never carried out his proposed expedition, in search of the friend for whom he had professed such warm admiration and interest.

Mary was not so much surprised at this, it being only accordant with her cousin's ineffectual character—warm and affectionate in heart and feeling, but unstable in action and resolve; without self-devotedness or energy in any duty or pursuit, which turned not on the immediate fancy or interest of the moment—something else had probably put the intention

out of his head. It did seem to Mary strange and unnatural, that the disappearance of a man such as Eustace Trevor had been represented to her lively and susceptible fancy, should have been so tamely endured by his friends in general, to say nothing of his own brother ; but to think on that point was now to raise such a dark and bewildering cloud of ill-defined misgivings, that Mary put it from her mind as much as possible.

There was another point too, on which she indirectly sought enlightenment and assurance. Eugene's mother. Alas ! there indeed she had heard enough to make her shudder at the idea connected with much within that house, which she had visited with such pleasure in her unconscious innocence—but more especially with that sinful old man, who, in the garb of venerable old age, had been by her so ignorantly revered ; yes, she shuddered to think how appearances may deceive, and shrunk at the thoughts of ever entering again the scene of such wickedness, as long at least as Eugene's father continued there to exist.

That Eugene had in the remotest degree even countenanced that wickedness, was another point she would not allow herself to question—or rather, she put it away, like every other deteriorating rumour, hearsay, or inarticulate whisper, which in the course of time come with its airy hand to point out her lover as unworthy of the devotedness of a heart and affections such as hers; put it away in the utmost recesses of her heart, as we do those things we fear to see or hear substantiated—when even a breath, a word would suffice to destroy the illusion now become so closely interwoven with the happiness of one's existence.

In the meantime, Mary lived chiefly with the Gillespies though her heart's true home was with that dear brother, upon whose progress and success in his profession the chief interest of her life, independent of her one great hope, was centred; and who, on his part, unselfishly devoted every interval between the course of study he so energetically pursued, to her society, endeavouring in every way to promote her happiness or amusement; and chafing inwardly

as he did, over the position in which she stood ; for her sake preserved outward patience and equanimity, on a point which nevertheless touched him to the quick. Much he heard, too, which made him devoutly wish the engagement with Eugene Trevor to be broken off, without his having courage to take the bandage from his sister's eyes. Much of the private history of these, Eugene Trevor's days—we call them—of probation—nay, the profligate course his love for Mary could not even restrain within bounds. Episodes in his daily walk, with which it is not our intention to sully our pages, but calculated to make the brother's blood boil with indignation at the idea of his pure spotless sister, becoming the wife of such a man.

But how difficult the task to force on her unsuspecting mind convictions which might go nigh to break her trembling innocent heart—or at least blight the happiness of her life. He must patiently allow fate to work out its course, fervently praying that all might end well.

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About a year and a half went by—another six months and Arthur Seaham's term of law study would have terminated; and he declared that to prepare himself for his last important term, it was necessary that he should have some more than ordinary relaxation of mind. He had a fancy to go to Italy, and that Mary should accompany him. She smiled at first incredulously, thinking he was in jest. She thought the idea too delightful to be realised.

He was in earnest, he declared.

But the journey would be so long; and the expense—could they manage it?

What were such considerations to the affectionate brother, when he remarked the glow which had mantled his sister's pale cheeks, or the animation which lit up her languid eye, as in imagination the warm breezes of Italy already fanned her brow—her feet trode lightly on its classic grounds. Their friends had a few prudent objections to the plan—Italy was so far; Germany—the Rhine, were suggested. But no; Arthur saw that Mary's countenance

fell when the mark fell short of Italy, therefore he stood firm.

And thither then the brother and sister went, with an old attached maid-servant of the family, who still followed the fortunes of the unmarried daughter ; and by the Rhine and Switzerland they proceeded into Italy.

CHAPTER V.

We came to Italy. I felt
A yearning for its sunny sky ;
My very spirit seem'd to melt
As swept its first warm breezes by.

WILLIS.

AN early morning in Italy! Who that from experience has not enjoyed—can realise the conception, much less describe, the luxurious delight of the first hours of a summer morning in that radiant climate.

“It was the morn of such a day, as must have risen on Eden first,” that Mary Seaham went forth from the little inn near Tivoli, to join her brother who had preceded her some little time to make arrangements respecting their intended excursion of the day.

She waited—but when he did not come, could no longer resist the tempting aspect of the scenery without, to stroll onwards from the house towards the merry waters which danced on their musical way not far distant from the spot ; and as she proceeded through the fragrant air—beneath the transparent sky, the sigh she heaved could have been caused but by the burden of enjoyment now weighing upon her senses ; for all human care—all sadness, all unrest, all passionate yearnings or pensive remembrances—in short, all unconnected with “the mere and breathing charm of life,” seemed in that thrilling hour, annihilated and forgotten.

But something glittering on the ground, near a flower she had stooped to pick, suddenly attracted her attention. She took it up and examined it more closely. It was a massive signet ring. What was Mary’s astonishment to see engraved upon the seal, the initials “E. T.” with the Trevor coat of arms.

Her first thought was of Eugene—could it be that he by some strange coincidence was near ?

or that he had purposely followed her to Italy? and her heart beat fast, and her cheek glowed at the suggestion. Yet she had never remembered observing such a ring on Eugene's finger, and then—another indefinite recollection of having somewhere before seen that same impression on some letter, certainly not *from* her lover, occurred to her.

Yes—and suddenly the breakfast-table at Silverton, and that letter—the letter to Eugene which she had ever since suspected must have been the turning-point of her previous perfect felicity, but which she had always supposed must have been from Eugene's father. That large red seal the little Louisa had displayed before her eyes. All was now before her. But how then came it lying here upon this foreign soil?

Was it forbidden her to lose, even for a moment, the thrilling consciousness of the fate which bound her, that there should be now thrown across her very path, this startling reminder?

Standing fixed to the spot — turning the

signet over and over in her hand, an uncertain, half-bewildered expression on her sweet face—a sudden idea which crimsoned it to the very temples, then leaving it paler than before—suddenly lit up her countenance.

How, indeed, came it lying there? “E. T.” Surely from the old man’s finger it had not dropped; and if not from Eugene’s, might it, could it have been from that of the lost, unhappy, wandering brother, Eustace’s?

With what object, what intent, she scarcely knew herself—but impulse moved her, with beating heart and trembling step, to pursue the path which she had taken, only remembering the while, that last night, after she was in bed, there had been an arrival at the inn. Two gentlemen from Rome, the *cameriera* who called her in the morning told her, had roused the house up at a very late hour; and that one of these belated travellers had nevertheless already pressed the dewy turf before her—that it might be him who was the loser, was perhaps, the paramount idea which now possessed her as she hurried on over this fair Italian ground as light

in limb—alas! less light at heart as when bounding over the breezy wilds of her native land.

She had not been wrong in her conjecture. A sudden turn in the lovely vale she had entered presented to her view, at no great distance from the spot she had attained, a broken fountain, the silvery sound of whose ringing waters faintly reached her ear; and near this, half concealed by the branches of a leaning tree, she discerned the figure of a man, standing watching its light and sparkling play.

A few half irresolute steps brought her nearer and nearer still—a few more, and she stood attracted as if by an irresistible spell almost close behind the object of her search. His face had been turned away, but the light rustling of her garments when she drew so near, attracted his attention.

He looked round, and there stood Mary with parted lips and crimsoned brow—that look of strange, deep, and eager scrutiny directed towards him.

Never did the face of mortal man undergo such immediate change, as did the calm, noble

countenance which at the same time revealed itself to the intruder ; never were two simple words uttered with such thrilling fervency of tone, as was the ejaculation which broke from the stranger's lips.

" Miss Seaham," he exclaimed ; and in accents scarce less earnest in its emotion, Mary's trembling lips faltered Mr. Temple's name.

Yes, it was indeed Edward Temple, upon whom she gazed with ill-defined ideas—and feelings of bewilderment and perplexity—her high-wrought expectations unable all at once to sink themselves to the level of natural composure—pale, agitated, and trembling, without further greeting or explanation,

" She showed the ring."

" I found it," she said with almost hysterical incoherency, and thought perhaps—but your's it cannot be—and yet it is strange—the initials are the same—but—can it really be, that your crest—your arms also are similar?"

For all reply he gently took the ring from her outstretched hand, and in silence seemed to examine it. Then without looking up, and in a low, calm voice he said :

"You expected I conclude, to find the owner had been Eugene Trevor?"

"No, not Eugene," Mary quietly replied, restored to greater self-possession, "but perhaps, I thought—it was a random idea—that perhaps it might have been his brother Eustace."

The ring dropped suddenly from her listener's fingers, as she uttered these last words.

"And what," he murmured, having stooped to raise it from the ground, "and what interest can Miss Seaham take in that ill-starred, that unhappy man; that outcast, alien brother, that her mistake should cause disappointment, such as I so plainly perceive it to have occasioned her?"

Mary probably attributed to wounded feeling the trembling pathos of the speaker's voice, for with all the simple earnestness of her kindly nature, she hastened in gentle soothing accents to reply:

"Mr. Temple—if disappointment was the first impulse of my feelings—believe me, when I say, there is scarcely any one else," with a weary sigh, the tears gathering in her eyes, "with whom a meeting so unexpected, could just now have afforded me such unmixed pleasure."

For one short moment her hand was retained

by the so-called Mr. Temple in a trembling pressure, which appeared to speak all his heart's grateful acknowledgement, whilst those dark eyes fixed themselves upon her face with mournful earnestness of expression.

But the next moment, with a low-breathed sigh, which might have seemed the echo of her own, he released her hand, and turned away his head.

"You are kind to say this," he murmured "for myself, I can only declare this meeting to be a happiness such as I had hardly expected ever to taste again in this world. But," he anxiously inquired, "will you again permit me to inquire the reason of the more than common—nay even, taking into consideration his relationship—more than natural interest, it would appear you feel in the unfortunate Eustace Trevor."

The earnest melancholy of his tone thrilled on Mary's heart.

"Mr. Temple," she said eagerly, "you speak with feeling on this subject, can it, oh! can it be possible that you have ever seen, ever known Eugene Trevor's brother? Oh, tell me if this is really the case, for you say true—in more than common degree—quite independently of selfish

motives, connected with my own happiness—has my interest been excited in his discovery. It has been most strongly awakened in the fate, and history of one who has lately been brought before me in a light so charming yet so sad. Oh ! Mr. Temple, you do not deny the fact. Then, tell me, only tell me where he can be found ?”

Eustace Trevor had turned upon her the full light of his radiant countenance, radiant with a new and strange delight, the nature of which she could not comprehend ; but as, with clasped hands and beseeching countenance, she uttered this latter inquiry, it was answered by a gesture, seeming to imply by her listener ignorance in the required information.

“ You, then, did not know him ?” she resumed, with renewed disappointment in her tone.

“ I did know him—ah, too well !” was the murmured reply, his eyes, with a strange and mysterious expression, fixed upon the ground.

Very pale suddenly grew Mary’s cheek as she looked upon him thus. Her lips parted, and her heart beat fast as from the shock of

a strange and sudden idea, which flashed across her senses. But she put by the suggestion as the wild improbable coinage of her own high wrought imagination. She remembered too what had struck her often vaguely before, and also her brother's remark on a former occasion, with reference to the same resemblance. But when she looked again, the glowing illusion had faded, her companion was again calmly regarding her, again asking—in what she esteemed a cold and careless tone of voice—from whom it was, she had received the impression respecting Eustace Trevor, to which she had just alluded.

“It was his friend, and my cousin—Louis de Burgh, who first spoke of him to me in such warm and glowing terms; but he chiefly raised my interest by the beautiful but melancholy picture he drew of his devoted affection for his mother—that mother,” she added in a low, sad tone, “with whose unhappy history, I then for the first time was made acquainted—indeed it caused his very affliction to become almost holy in my eyes—by showing it to have been but the crisis of his high and sacred grief. Mr. Temple,” she

continued with enthusiasm ; “ there seems to me something, if I may so speak, almost God-like in the pure and devoted love of a strong proud-hearted man towards his mother ; and it is God-like, for was not the last earthly thought—the last earthly care of Him who hung upon the cross, even in his mortal agony—for his mother !”

The speaker’s glistening eyes were raised above or she might have seen tears indeed,

“ Such as would not stain an angel’s cheek,”

also irradiating the eyes of that “ strong proud-hearted man,” as she so expressed herself—who was standing by her side.

But she could not have heard—for it was not breathed for mortal ear, the deep and fervent cry : “ My Mother !” which her innocent words, like thrilling music by the winds, struck from the secret chords of that manly tender heart.

But this was a theme Eustace Trevor’s melting soul could not trust itself to pursue ; not indeed, without it were first allowed him to cast away all subterfuge and disguise, and at the feet of that good, kind, and gentle girl,

open his whole bruised and desolate heart, to receive that Heavenly balsam of pity and consolation, she had ready stored within her breast for the faithful son of that wronged and sainted mother !

And could this be done? Had he not for the sake of this same gentle being, in some sort pledged himself to such an extent, that yielding to the impulse would be baseness and dishonour.

Alas ! as in all divergement from the direct and natural paths of human action, in whatsoever spirit they may have been entered upon, the time must come — circumstances must arise — when the line of duty becomes bewilderingly shadowy and indistinct, even to the most conscientious and true-hearted.

How few can steer their way unwavering through the straightened pathway of a false position. It is not there, that like a stately ship he can vigorously part the waves of circumstance or temptation,

“ And bear his course aright.

Nor ought for tempest doth from it depart,

Nor ought for fairer weather's false delight.”

Therefore, with an effort over his feelings

which might have made him appear unaffected by the sentiments his companion had so touchingly expressed, he was forced merely to reply: "Yes, Louis de Burgh was his friend; and it would be very gratifying to Eustace Trevor to know that one friend at least in that world he has abandoned, retains him in such affectionate remembrance. And his brother"—he added, with more hesitating restraint in his tone, "did you never receive anything of the same impression from him?"

"Eugene," Mary answered with some slight embarrassment, "rarely ever enlarged upon a theme which of course had become connected in his mind with painful feelings."

"*Painful indeed!*" was the other's significant rejoinder.

"Never but once," Mary continued, "did I venture to question him upon the subject with any minuteness, and then he manifested such strong and painful emotion that I never afterwards approached it willingly. But at that time," she added with a sigh, "I had certainly heard very little of his brother, but the dark and terrible malady with which he was afflicted. Mr. Temple," she continued anxiously, "is not

his complete disappearance most mysterious and inexplicable? and does it not appear to you almost impossible, that all the means which have been taken for his recovery could have been so completely unattended by success, supposing he were still alive?"

"But have any such means been taken?" her companion asked with some marked curiosity.

"Oh yes!" she hastened to reply "on Eugene's part at least."

A peculiar smile played on her companion's lips. It did not fail to strike Mary, and the incredulity it seemed to imply caused her feelings now so peculiarly sensitive upon that point, to be immediately up in arms.

"Mr. Temple, can you for a moment doubt this fact, he is Eugene's own brother, and—" she added in a low voice, the crimson blood at the same time mantling her cheeks, as the remembrance that she was addressing a rejected lover, pressed more consciously upon her, "he had interests of a different nature, closely connected with the assurance of his lost brother's fate?"

Mr. Temple started with sudden excitement.

"Indeed!" he exclaimed, then averting his head, he added, as if the utterance of each syllable was a separate pang "Do you mean to say that there is still a question of this marriage?"

"There is," she replied; "though of a very remote and undefined nature, our engagement still subsists."

Having said this with no little embarrassment of manner, the same feeling probably caused her to raise her arm from the fountain, over which she had been unconsciously leaning, and by tacit consent they turned away from the spot, silently beginning to retrace their steps. They had not proceeded thus many yards, when Arthur Seaham appeared in sight, accompanied by a second person, who Mary, with an exclamation of delighted surprise, recognized as Mr. Wynne, concerning whom in the absorbing interest of the last hour she had no time to seek information.

The good clergyman on his part, who had fallen in with her brother at the hotel, was charmed beyond expression by this fortunate and unexpected meeting with his own dear children, (so he called Mary and Arthur;) and

peculiar was the glance of interest which beamed from his kindly eyes, as having gazed anxiously into Mary's face, he turned then towards her companion, who nevertheless with his fine countenance only a little paler than usual, was exchanging kind and cordial greetings with young Seaham.

"Oh! Mary, Mary!" the good clergyman whispered, as he drew his fair friend's arm within his own and walked on, the others following together behind, "I have heard sad stories of you, little quiet one, since I saw you last;—trampling noble flowers under your feet, and grasping at thorns, which something in that sweet face of your's tells me have not failed to do their wounding work. This comes of reading all that dreamy poetry I used to warn you against. A good and pleasant thing it is in its degree, but too much of it dazzles and deludes the senses, till at length they come to be unable to discern darkness from light, good from evil. Well! well!" he added, as Mary pretty well accustomed by this time to indirect attacks of this nature, attempted no defence, but with a faint melancholy smile, only drooped her head in silence and resignation. "Ah! well,

even now who knows ! The Almighty never will permit his little ones to walk on long in darkness, but in the end ever leads them by secret ways into safe and quiet pastures."

CHAPTER VI.

The stern

Have deeper thoughts than your dull eyes discern,
And when they love, your smilers guess not how
Beats the strong heart, though less their lips avow.

BYRON.

The victory is most sure

For him, who, seeking faith by virtue, strives
To yield entire submission to the law
Of conscience.

WORDSWORTH.

“ARTHUR, this can scarcely be possible,”
Mary exclaimed with almost trembling solicitude, when alone with her brother, he informed her of the proposal Mr. Wynne had made—and he had unhesitatingly accepted—that he and his friend Mr. Temple should join their party during the succeeding week’s tour.

“Not if it is disagreeable to you, Mary, certainly,” was the brother’s reply; “otherwise I must say I can see no objection to the plan; nor does Mr. Wynne either it seems, as he made the proposal, being of course aware by this time of the past circumstances respecting you and Temple. All that of course is an affair over and forgotten, particularly when made aware how matters stand with regard to your engagement with Trevor; so on your part, you will have nothing to fear. It only rests with him, I should think, to determine whether he is equal to the ordeal of your society, though to judge by his countenance just now, firm and calm as a statue, after a meeting which must have put his feelings rather to the test, I should say there was not much doubt upon the matter.

“ ‘Nay, if she loves me not, I care not for her.

Shall I look pale because the maiden blooms,

Or sigh because she smiles—or sighs for others.’

No—no, Miss Mary, that is not our way, however it may be with you ladies in cases of the kind.

“ ‘Great or good, or kind, or fair,

I will ne’er the more despair;

If she love me, this believe,
I will die e'er she shall grieve,

“ Be she with that goodness blest,
Which may merit name of best.
If she be not such to me—
What care I how good she be.’ ”

Thus the brother playfully sung and quoted, though whether the philosophical doctrine the old poet implied in his song had the effect of easing his listener's mind upon the point in question, her faint and absent smile was not exactly calculated to declare ; though perhaps could he have read aright the secret history of that anxious countenance, he might have seen how far less any such considerations were agitating his sister's mind than the remembrance of Eugene's strange and angry excitement in the Edinburgh gardens, on the subject of this same Edward Temple ; and the question now chiefly agitating her breast to be, whether she could without treason to her lover, place herself in the position and circumstances now under discussion — yet what was she to do ? She knew that Arthur could not enter into her feelings on this point ; besides, was there not some unconfessed leaning in her secret heart

in favour of the arrangement. For that interview of the morning, and the circumstances from which it took its rise ; had it not aroused ideas of perplexity, interest, and anxiety in her mind ? was there not still much left unaccounted for and unexplained ?

She mentioned the ring to her brother. He was surprised, and thought it a strange coincidence, though certainly it did often happen that families of different names, bore the same crests, sometimes the same arms.

Mary's recognition of the impression showed at least there to be, some connection between Eugene Trevor and Mr. Temple. Arthur could easily gain explanation from Mr. Wynne on the subject. He also was often puzzled to know to what family of Temple his friend belonged.

But, before time or explanation was given for any such inquiry, the little party yielding themselves passively as it were to the irresistible force of circumstances which had so singularly united them, were pursuing their way over the enchanted ground Arthur had previously marked out for their excursion, most of which the two more experienced travellers had already explored,

but gladly retrode for the benefit of their young companions.

“ By sweet Val d’Arno’s tinted hills,
In Vallambrosa’s convent gloom,
Mid Terni’s vale of singing rills,
By deathless lairs in solemn Rome.

* * * *

Ruin, and fane, and waterfall.”

They wandered delightedly, and never did Mr. Wynne and Arthur cease to congratulate themselves and one another; the latter, on the valuable acquisition he and his sister had gained in such able cicerones as himself and his companion; whilst Mary and Mr. Temple, by their silence only, gave testimony to the same effect.

Yes, it were well for the good Mr. Wynne and the young and hopeful-hearted Arthur

“ Cheerful old age, and youth serene,”

to yield themselves to the charm of sunny skies and classic ground, and to feel almost as if earth wanted no more to make it Heaven.

“ A calm and lovely paradise
Is Italy for hearts at ease.”

But for the other two, as may be supposed,

there wanted something more, or rather something less, to render their enjoyment as full and unalloyed.

For in spite of all Arthur had urged to the contrary, it was too plainly evident that something there was—a restraint—a consciousness, influencing their secret feelings, and imparting themselves to their outward demeanour, in common intercourse one with another ; which no exciting or absorbing diversities of scene or circumstance could entirely dissipate or dispel.

Sometimes indeed, Mary, carried away by the delight of the moment, would forget whose eye had fixed itself for a brief moment, with such earnest interest, on her countenance ; or even meet unshrinkingly the glance, the smile of sympathy, which her murmurings of enraptured admiration at times drew forth.

Sometimes unconsciously, as if it had been only as a portion of the magic spell which hung on all around her, she found herself listening to that voice, whose few, calm, graphic words had power to throw desired light on some old haunt or story—or touch with a bright glow the scene before them, or oftener turn away with a startled look of anxious thought as if some

sudden association or remembrance recalled her to consciousness, and broke the spell.

“Too happy to be your guide and guardian, through scenes and beauty which even your lively imagination is incompetent to conceive!”

Did the words, which had once proceeded from those same lips, thrill upon her recollection? or was it only the jealous disapproval of her lover Eugene which would start up to trouble her on such occasions?

Whilst Eustace—it would be vain to tell what caused the quick transition of that glance or smile into the cold and rigidly averted brow, or caused to die away upon his lips words whose inspiration sprang from a source which could not be worthily encouraged.

Thus, day after day went on, and brought but diminished opportunity of touching on those points of interest so near her heart, and concerning which she more and more became possessed with the vague and restless fancy, that Mr. Temple possessed more power than any one imagined of enlightenment; for she avoided, as much as possible, finding herself alone with him, and if at times, as inevitably it occurred, they were thrown together apart from

the other two, Mary's haunting vision of Eugene's jealous disapproval of her intimacy with Mr. Temple would cast a restraint over her feelings, and made her shrink from availing herself of the favourable opportunity thus afforded.

Of course Mr. Wynne—and through him Eustace Trevor had soon learnt from Arthur every particular relating to his sister's situation with regard to Eugene, and the effect produced upon the latter by the circumstances which transpired, was evidenced only by the calm, rigid expression which settled on his interesting countenance—only subdued into soft and gentle melancholy, when at times, unobserved by herself, his eyes could fix themselves on Mary; and as for meeting her half-way, in any renewal of the subject, so particularly discussed near the fountain that first morning of their meeting, he, with almost equal pointedness, might have seemed to avoid any occasion which could tend to its revival.

On the other hand, from Mr. Wynne the more unconscious and unsuspecting Arthur could gain little satisfactorily information on the topic on which he had promised to make inqui-

ries. He always fought off any cross questioning on any particular subject connected with his friend Temple.

Indeed this was easy enough to do ; for heart and soul absorbed in the exciting enjoyment of scenes and circumstances in which he entered with such enthusiastic delight, Arthur was not very capable of pressing hard just now upon any serious point, not immediately connected with the interest of the day or the hour.

But when Mary, with whom the old man had hitherto as skilfully warded off any timid attempts on her part to draw him forth on the subject on which he was vowed to secrecy—when she, one sultry afternoon, had been conversing for some time so delightfully with her dear old friend, concerning days gone by, in the cool marble *sala* of an old *palazzo* near Genoa, where they had found temporary accomodation—without any preparation, fixed her earnest eyes upon her companion's face, and said beseechingly:

“ Mr. Wynne, will you answer me one question? you are acquainted I know, with everything concerning Mr. Temple ; but I only wish to ascertain one point ; was he ever acquainted with Eugene Trevor ? ”

The good man was taken by surprise, and displayed by his countenance considerable signs of embarrassment, succeeded, however, by equal symptoms of relief, when looking up he beheld Mr. Temple, who had joined them unobserved, and must inevitably have overheard Mary's words, and witnessed the perplexity they had occasioned her friend.

Mary's cheek also flushed deeply ; yet when the next moment Mr. Wynne, with some careless excuse for leaving them, had walked away, and she found herself alone with him who best could answer to the question which had scarcely died upon her lips, she took courage, and with her eyelashes sweeping her varying cheek, in a low, yet steady voice, said :

" Mr. Temple, I was asking Mr. Wynne a question, to which for some reason he did not seem able or willing to reply ; will you tell me whether you ever knew Eugene Trevor ?"

An instant's pause—then, in a tone in which, though calm, there was something unnatural and strange in the sound, there came the laconic reply—" *I did.*"

And then there was a solemn pause. For what could Eustace Trevor add—how reply to

the mute but eager questioning of those eyes, now fixed intently upon him, as if in the verdict of his lips there lay more power to ease the heart of its blind fears and nameless misgivings—more in one calm word of his

“Than all the world’s defied rebuke.”

Therefore, though Mary held her breath, hoping, longing that he should proceed, yet shrinking from more direct inquiry, there he stood, with lips compressed and stern averted eyes; no marble statue could have remained more mute; till to break the ominous and oppressive silence, Mary pronounced the name of “Eustace Trevor.”

Then, indeed, her listener’s eyes relaxed their fixed expression—a sudden glow lit up his countenance.

In a low, deep tone, and with a soft, melancholy smile, he demanded:

“And what, Miss Seaham, of Eustace Trevor?”

“What of him? Oh! Mr. Temple, all—everything that you may know—may have reason to suspect or conceive concerning him!”

Another pause; and then the voice of Mr. Temple, with renewed sadness replied:

“What could I tell you concerning him, but that he is a wanderer upon the face of the earth, as you—as everybody are aware.”

“But why—but wherefore should this be; why forsake his country, his home, his kindred? Now, when Louis de Burgh gave me reason to suppose all further necessity was removed, his temporary affliction entirely subsided, why not return?”

“Return!” interrupted the other—“return with that brand—that stigma—which once attached to his name, must mark him in the eyes of men—a thing of suspicion, nay, of fear for ever; return, when that return must be to hear that curse in every blast—to be cut off from every hope, every tie which makes life beautiful to other men, or—” he paused; for he was on the point of saying, “or—bitter alternative—brand a still worse stigma on another; on one who however unworthy of such consideration, I must still remember as my brother.” Thus he probably would have spoken, had not he been recalled to recollection by the strange and anxious expression depicted on Mary’s countenance, and then he added, with an effort at self-command.

"The imputation of madness is a fearful thing, Miss Seaham, to be attached to a man's name; and Eustace Trevor, unfortunate man! is possessed of feelings most sensitive—morbidly sensitive, perhaps."

"It is—it is," Mary faltered, "a fearful thing if suffered to rest there; but surely his is not the course to accomplish the removal of the idea. Let Eustace Trevor but return—let him at least try and experience what a brother's kindness—what a sister's love can do, to wipe from his remembrance the morbid memory of his past affliction; and show to the world (if he fears its altered smiles) that the shock his noble mind sustained was but for a moment; that he is—"

But it was enough—those words, a brother's kindness—still more, a sister's love, had thrilled acutely upon the listener's heart.

And Mary paused, startled to behold the expression in the eyes bent so earnestly upon her.

"A sister's love!" what was such love to him!

However, with another strong effort he said in a voice scarce audible from emotion, "For such a sister's love, he might indeed brave and

defy the scorn—the ignominy of the universe; but,” he faltered, “it cannot be.”

A silence of some minutes ensued. It was broken by Mary, who said in an anxious trembling voice,

“Mr. Temple, I have a favour to ask of you: I know you are acquainted with much of the private history of the Trevors—I am *sure* you are—I therefore entreat you will speak candidly upon the subject, and tell me your own opinion of Eugene Trevor. To you I can speak as I feel I can to no one else. My mind of late has been disturbed by doubts and fears upon the subject of Eugene. I know you *can*, you *will* speak the truth; so conceal not your real opinion from me.”

“Miss Seaham, excuse me,” Mr. Temple replied gravely, and with a degree of proud coldness “I must decline to speak in any way of Eugene Trevor. It is a long time now since we have met.”

“Oh, why—why,” faltered Mary, with clasped hands and streaming eyes, “would you too, like the rest, by your looks, even by your silence, make me suspect the worth, the rectitude of Eugene, and give me the miserable idea that

the affection and heart's devotion now of years have been wasted and bestowed in vain?"

It was a difficult moment for that generous, noble soul. The peculiar situation in which he was placed almost bewildered his sense of discernment between what was right and wrong in his position, and darkened the way before him. How act—how speak—how meet this critical emergency?

The struggle must have been indeed intense, which enabled him at length to rise a conqueror over the conflicting powers which beset his soul, to subdue all selfish promptings of inferior nature—all selfish impulses and considerations; and speak and act as one might have spoken and acted who had never been Mary Seaham's lover, or Eugene Trevor's injured brother.

As a brother to a well-beloved sister—or as one of his high and holy calling might have seized that favourable opportunity for endeavouring to turn a perplexed and trembling suppliant on his counsel and assistance from some dangerous path or fatal delusion, he took up the strain, and implored her not to seek from him any further information

on a subject—concerning which he must tell her at once, that for many reasons it was impossible for him to enter—he could not speak of Eugene Trevor. But he implored her to think well of those warnings so strongly pressed upon her consideration by her anxious friends—above all, by the internal evidence of her own pure soul—against a course of action in which the peace and happiness of her future life might be so fatally involved.

“Talk not of wasted affection,” he touchingly exclaimed; “affection disinterested and blameless as yours, was never wasted—never bestowed in vain—for some good purpose, the All Wise so willed that you should for a time bestow it, and if He ordains that its waters should turn back, like the rain to their springs, He wills also that they should fill them with refreshment. Miss Seaham, it is not for me to advise you to break off your engagement with Eugene Trevor. I am the last person in the world—situated towards you as I have been”—he added in a low sad voice, “who ought to presume so to do; but let me speak to you, as you may remember I once before addressed you—before it had ever

entered my heart to conceive you would stand in the position you now are in towards this Eugene Trevor. Did I not then warn you of the world into which you were hastening so unwarily — of its sins its sorrows, and its snares; but still more, of its friendships, its smiles, its Judas kisses, awaiting not alone the eagle but the dove—the holy, harmless, and undefiled? And *now* do not my gloomy words find an echo in your heart? does not that look of care, that heavy sigh, confess that it had been better never to have tasted of the feverish joy, the unsatisfying delight, in exchange for the peace and tranquillity you had hitherto enjoyed? Is not your confidence disturbed—your trust shaken in the object on whom your affections have been set? do you not fear to lean more heavily on that reed lest it pierce you—to grasp it firmer, lest you crush, and prove its hollowness? Oh, Miss Seaham! is not this in some degree the case with you? if so, do not seek to dive further into the why or the wherefore. Let God's providence have its way, when, it seeks to turn you from a course it is not good for you to follow. Let faith and patience have their perfect work; seek peace

and happiness from a higher, surer source than the dubious object on which your affections have been placed."

Mr. Temple paused, but he had no reason to suppose his earnest appeal had been as water spilt upon the ground ; for something in Mary's face—that something, which had become of late its ruling and habitual expression, which might have seemed to breathe forth the Psalmist's weary longing for "the wings of a dove to fly away and be at rest"—at rest, from the ever receding hopes—the sickening doubts and apprehensions—the wearying mysteries attendant on her position, which pressed so heavily on a nature formed rather for the peace and calm of gentle emotions, of peaceful joys, than for its strife of passions, its storm of woes ; an expression which had appeared to Eustace Trevor to deepen as he spoke, for not for a moment did he dare to interpret it otherwise. Never did he surmise—never *dare* even to desire—that words uttered with such disinterested and single-minded intention, and in accents tremulous with such unselfish emotions, could in any other way affect his listener's heart. That in that hour of languid yearning

for strength she felt that she did not possess; for rest and peace founded on some surer basis than that "reed shaken by the wind," such as her inauspicious love had gradually assumed the semblance, she should be most ready to lean her weary head on the noble breast, cling to the sheltering arm of him who thus had counselled her, and placing her destiny in his hands, ask him to guide her future course through the deceitful bewildering mazes of this life.

But no word, no look betrayed the secret impulse of her heart; and in the same anxious strain Eustace Trevor proceeded :

"Darkly, ambiguously, I have been compelled to speak; the subject having been, as you can bear witness, forced in a manner upon me; yet one step further I will take, and leave the rest in the hands of God. This ring," drawing the signet from his finger, where for the first time since the adventure in which it had formed a part, Mary had again seen it; "keep it," he continued, in a voice tremulous with emotion as Mary mechanically received it in her hands, looking wonderingly and enquiringly in his face; "keep it till you see *him*, Eugene Trevor again; then show it to him from *me*—

from Edward Temple. Tell him the circumstances under which you received it, and ask him to clear up the mystery concerning it. If he refuses, then for his own sake as well as your own, I conjure you to bid him farewell for ever. If on the contrary, casting off all falsehood and deceit, he lays all before you, then—then—may Heaven direct the rest!”

* * * * *

An hour or two after Mary had been left alone within the marble *sala*, almost as in a dream, gazing upon that mysterious and momentous ring, the little party were proceeding northwards in the cool of the evening, in one of the hired conveyances of the country. Mary, her brother, and Mr. Wynne occupying the interior; Mary being only at a later stage of the journey, confirmed in her supposition of Mr. Temple having proceeded thus far on the outside, for since he had parted abruptly from her he had not again appeared.

Then, however, when, to change horses, they stopped before a road-side inn, her brother suddenly touched her arm, and directed her attention towards the spot, where in the shadow of the door, his features only partly distinguished

in the declining evening light, stood the tall and stately figure of Temple, apparently conversing with Mr. Wynne who had just alighted, though his eyes were fixed earnestly in their direction.

"Look, Mary, does it not strike you now?"

"What, Arthur?"

"That likeness; there just as he stands in that uncertain light?"

Mary for all reply shuddered slightly, and turned away her head. The next moment Mr. Wynne had rejoined them, and they started again.

But by the inn-door there still stood that dark figure.

Arthur, with an exclamation of surprise, put forth his head, and inquired why they had left Mr. Temple behind.

"Because—because," Mr. Wynne replied in a peculiar tone of voice, "he has taken it into his head not to travel any further with us just now. I shall rejoin him when I have seen you safe at Genoa, for I cannot make up my mind to part so suddenly with my two dear children. Temple desired me to bid you good

bye, Arthur, for he has no great fancy for leave-takings, at any time ; and I was to say farewell for him to you too, Miss Mary."

This he said in a more serious manner, taking Mary's hand as he spoke, and gazing earnestly into her face. The hand he held was very cold, and on the pale face there was a strange and anxious expression ; but whilst Arthur was loud in his professions of surprise and regret at this unexpected deprivation, Mary uttered no word of astonishment or regret.

CHAPTER VII.

Bear up,
Yet still bear up. No bark did e'er,
By stooping to the storm of fear,
Escape the tempest's wrath.

BEAUMONT.

He doth tell me where to borrow
Comfort in the midst of sorrow.

WITHERS.

It was the eve of the opening assize day, and even in the quiet little town of —— might be observed that aspect of bustle and excitement generally prevailing on such occasions.

In a private apartment of the hotel honoured by the presence of the judge himself, sat a young man bending with the intensest interest and attention over the books and papers which lay upon the table before him.

It was Arthur Seaham, whose brave and

strenuous exertions had been crowned with honourable success. He had been called to the bar, and was about to start forward with hopeful confidence on his new career, it being his first case with which we find him so zealously engaged.

Happy young man! Many might have envied you at that moment. Young in heart, sanguine and resolute in spirit, with every good and honourable motive to urge you on to exertion—a life of action and reality is before you.

“Life that shall send a challenge to the end,
And when it comes, say—Welcome, friend!”

“*L'action avec un but*”—the auspicious banner under which you launch forth upon your new career.

For some hours the young barrister continued unremitting at his task, and would perhaps have remained so many more, had not another voice than that which had probably during this time been sounding in his ears—suddenly broke the spell, and flushed his cheek—kindled his eye with a very different inspiration to that which had previously illumined it.

A clear musical laugh which, to Arthur's ear, sounded more like the ringing waters of Tivoli than anything he had ever since heard.

Then the door opening, admitted what might have appeared (to pursue the same strain of analogy) a wandering sunbeam from the skies of golden Italy, in the person of Carrie Elliott, the judge's lovely daughter.

"I am disturbing you, I know, Mr. Seaham," she exclaimed blushing, advancing; "but it is your sister's fault. She says it is quite time that you should be disturbed; did you not, Miss Seaham?" turning to her companion.

Mary, who, with a faint and gentle smile, very different in its character to that which played so brightly on the features of the other, acquiesced in the truth of the assertion. But Arthur did not look very angry at the interruption, and was soon standing by the window entering with a very unbusiness-like spirit into conversation with his lively visitor, who, this being her father's first circuit in a judicial capacity, had been, much to her amusement

and delight, suffered to accompany him on this occasion.

To this circumstance had Mary also been indebted for the opportunity thus afforded her of witnessing her brother's first start in his profession ; for having been of late thrown somewhat intimately into the society of the judge's family, it had finally been arranged that the two young ladies should have the benefit of each other's society, on an occasion of such especial interest to them both.

"But do tell me something about your case, Mr. Seaham. Is it not a very interesting story ? a poor young woman accused of forgery ?"

"Yes," Seaham replied, glancing at his sister ; "at least an attempt to exchange bank-notes, which on discovery were found to be forged. It is, indeed, an interesting case ; and having full internal evidence that she is innocent, I am doubly concerned in her acquittal. That fact at least is in my favour, for I am afraid I shall be never able to plead *con amore* under contrary circumstances. The fact is, this poor woman has been for years toiling hard to amass a sufficient sum to carry

her to America to her betrothed husband. When still far from the desired point, sickness and other causes having often interrupted her exertions and retarded her success, she finds her lover, impatient at the delay, beginning to entertain injurious ideas of her constancy and truth. In this distressing emergency, it happened (this is her own statement of the case) that some friend came forward, and made up in those same forged notes the requisite amount; that she received them in perfect ignorance of their real character; but refusing absolutely to give up the name of the guilty donor, she was imprisoned, and now stands arraigned for at least connivance in the delinquency."

"Poor creature!" murmured Mary, "is this then the end of all her deferred hope—and wearing, wasting anxiety of mind and body! Oh! Arthur, in such a cause you must surely be successful; how much you will have to say to soften the hearts of her judges, and lead them to look upon the case with lenity and pity!"

"Really, Mary!" exclaimed her brother, smiling with affectionate interest at the sudden energy with which the subject of discussion had animated his sister; the thrilling pathos of her

tone—the brilliancy which lighted up her languid eye—the earnest spirit shining with almost sublimity from her anxious countenance, all which he had but a moment ago observed as affording so sad a contrast to the beaming brightness of her fair companion ; “ I really believe you would do more for my client in the way of eloquence than I should, if by eloquence the cause is to be gained. Do you not think so, Miss Elliott ?”

“ Miss Elliott has not yet tested your powers in that way,” Mary rejoined with a smile, whilst Carrie only laughed and blushed.

“ As for my eloquence,” she added with a sigh, “ it could only spring from the sympathetic feeling which one woman must have for the sufferings and the trials of another ; at least”—in a low tone she added, “ she must be very young or very happy,” glancing at Miss Elliott, “ if she be found wanting in that most powerful of inspirations.”

“ Poor woman !” interposed Miss Elliott, who perhaps began to fear she might be considered too uninspired in the eyes of the young barrister, “ she seems deemed throughout to suspicion. How dreadful to be suspected wrongfully ! But, as for that lover, I am sure he cannot deserve

all the trouble she has suffered on his account. I dare say, the faithlessness was all on his side, for no person could suspect or doubt any one they really loved. Do you not think so, Miss Seaham?" turning away her face from Arthur to look at his sister with a pretty blush.

An expression of intense pain shot across Mary's countenance.

"I thought so once," was the almost gasping utterance which trembled on her lips; but she paused, merely saying in a low tone, her eyes bent mournfully on the ground, "at any rate, the one who doubts and suspects is the greatest sufferer of the two. Yet there are circumstances, I hope, in which, without faithlessness, our perfect trust and confidence in another may—must indeed be shaken."

"Of course; otherwise the virtue becomes indeed a very weakness," rejoined Arthur with some moody significance of tone and manner.

"Now, I must go, for I suppose it is nearly time to dress for dinner," exclaimed Miss Elliott, who, though only partially acquainted with the particulars of Mary's love affair, probably perceived that she had inadvertantly struck upon some

tender string ; "I suppose, you will soon be doing the same."

And away the gay-hearted creature glided, singing as she went.

"Now, Mary," Arthur cried, his eyes and ears disenchanted ; "wait for me just one minute." And down he sat for the space of several moments, and his pen flew swift as thought over the parchment. Mary also sat patiently, her eyes fixed with a look of affectionate interest on the intelligent countenance of the writer.

At length, his task completed, the pen was thrown, with a gesture of triumph and satisfaction upon the table, and "Now, Mary, it is finished," was the exulting expression of his lips.

There was something in the congratulating smile which met his own, that seemed to change the spirit of the young man's dream ; for more thoughtfully he gathered up his papers, whilst "love, fame, ambition," might have seemed at once annihilated from his thoughts, by the tone of voice in which—glancing at Mary, who drew near to assist him—he abruptly murmured :

"Mary, you are not looking well."

"Am I not?" with forced cheerfulness; "ah! I dare say you think so to-day—by comparison."

"Nonsense!" knitting his brows; "I am *not* speaking comparatively, but quite positively. You have been looking less well every day for some time. I am becoming impatient. I want to see you looking better, or I should say, *happier*."

"As happy and bright I suppose as—" began Mary, attempting playfully to divert the dreaded theme.

"Pshaw! as bright as no one. I am thinking only of you, Mary."

"But you should think of some one else, now Arthur, that you are a steady, professional man."

"And now that I am this steady, professional man," taking the words out of her mouth, "I feel that I am justified and competent to offer my sister the settled home she once faithfully promised to share with me. *She* may have altered her wishes on the subject; mine remain unchanged. Still, Mary, (whatever you may have taken into your silly little head,) till your happiness is more definitely secure, you will remain the paramount object of my interest

and affection. My dear Mary," as his sister putting her hand in his, and smiling gratefully in his face, still shook her head, as if desiring and expecting for that dear brother, less unselfish aims, and more smiling hopes to cheer him on his promising career.

"God knows," he anxiously continued, "I speak from my heart when I say, that should you give me any hope that I could in any degree succeed in the promotion of your happiness, I should require no greater impetus to any exertion I may be called upon to make, than your affectionate interest in my success. Nay, do you not remember, even when we were children, your encouragement was the greatest incentive to my boyish ambition—how every mark of affection from you was more valuable to me than any bestowed by my other sisters, although I loved them all so well. In short, I declare to you, that the power of making me quite happy lies in your own hands—far more than in any careless-hearted beauty whom I might in a foolish moment take it into my head to ask to be my wife—and find, after all, that she did not care a straw for me. Therefore, dear Mary, only be persuaded to give up this, as I am sure

you must begin to feel it, most equivocal and inauspicious engagement, and let us try if we cannot be happy together, in time perhaps—as happy as if no such cloud had ever arisen—and who knows what more propitious fate may not still be in store for you ?

“ Mary,” he continued, as his sister shook her head despondingly, “ only consent to let final measures be taken, and I shall go forth to-morrow with double energy and hope. After all ! the pain is more in the idea than in the reality, for the matter is becoming really a mere affair of the imagination ; for a year and a half you have not seen or heard of him. But do not think I would make light of the sacrifice. The destruction of a great hope, must be, under any circumstances, a trial hard to be endured. But cheer up, dear Mary, there may be a brighter sun yet to shine upon you. Will you think this over ?”

“ I will Arthur,” she murmured faintly, “ I promise you that your mind shall very soon be set at rest on this subject.”

She could promise this with a presentiment that the words were not spoken without foundation—with a certain vague, unaccountable

presentiment, that some crisis was at hand in which her future fate would surely be accomplished. But she was little prepared for the communication which her brother now gently broke to her—that the opportunity was indeed, very soon to be afforded her, for that in the forthcoming case for which he had just been preparing his brief, Eugene Trevor would have to appear to give his evidence.

CHAPTER VIII.

Un Dieu descend toujours pour dénouer le drame,
Toujours la Providence y veille et nous proclame
Cette justice occulte et ce divin ressort,
Qui fait jouer le temps et gouverne le sort.

LAMARTINE.

THE court was crowded early the following morning, for it was not often that cases of such interest as the principal one to be brought forward on this occasion were provided by the inhabitants of ——, a town of the principality, in which it is well known, crime, comparatively speaking, is more rare than in other portions of the United Kingdom.

The prisoner had also been long known in the vicinity for her blameless career, and the patient industry with which, under disadvantages and discouragements (for she had been
• at an early age separated from both her parents,

and thrown upon her own resources), she had pursued her laborious course for ten long years, her heart set on an ever receding hope, which she had in the end been doomed to see engulfed by the dark cloud which now overshadowed her fame.

The court, therefore, was crowded as we said before, when a few minor cases having been disposed of, the prisoner for the forgery case was summoned to the bar.

There was nothing in the appearance of the accused which could at first sight strike the vulgar gaze. Neither youth nor beauty to excite the feeling in her behalf; for though to adopt the loving language of the poet:

“Fair she was, and young, when in hope
She began the long journey;
Faded she was, and old, when in disappointment it
ended;”

the age of care and trouble, rather than of years, for she was not more than one or two and thirty. Streaks of grey had already spread over her forehead, “and the furrows on her cheek spoke the course of bitter tears.” Yet few there were amongst the intelligent and feeling part of her

beholders who did not soon begin to have their interest strongly rivetted. And one amongst them, who felt her soul moved to its very depths by pity and womanly compassion the instant her eyes fell upon the pale meek face which bore such deep traces of sorrow—and patience as great as her sorrow.

And yet it was a passive sorrow it expressed, a subdued and passive suffering, which the careless might have attributed to dulness or insensibility, so little did the prisoner appear moved to wonder or self pity, by the sharp sense of unmerited misfortunes.

No — rather as one whose mind is all made up of submission and resignation ; who, accustomed to the constant anguish of disappointment, considered as no strange thing this last great grief which had befallen her.

And yet, the indictment being read, the prisoner in a low quiet tone pleaded “Not guilty.”

The facts, as commented upon by the counsel for the crown, were undeniably against her. Her case was pitiable, it was true. It seemed that at the very last—besides the sickness which had so often retarded her endeavours—a robbery committed in the little shop, in which she car-

ried on a small precarious trade, had despoiled her of the hardly-earned treasure of years; but this circumstance alone made it more likely that one in her situation should grasp at any means, promising to put such an effectual end to her long course of difficulties and disappointments. She pleaded ignorance as to the nature of the aid administered to her. Had she then only consented to give up the name of the guilty donor, the charge would have been withdrawn; and her pertinacious refusal to do so was enlarged upon by the learned counsel as evidence of her being accessory to the fraud.

From the depositions of the witnesses, it then appeared that Mabel Marryott's father had originally been a farmer in the county of —— shire; that soon after his daughter's birth he had emigrated to Australia; that her mother had not followed her husband's fortunes; had remained in England in the service of a family of consideration and distinction in that above-mentioned county, where she still remained. It appeared that the mother had little intercourse with her daughter. At an early age, the latter had been apprenticed to the business in which she afterwards became a partner; and then, as the

phrase goes, this little affectionate parent “washed her hands” of her concerns, and left her to strive for herself. About ten years before, the prisoner became acquainted, and finally engaged herself in marriage, with a young artisan on the point of emigrating to America, a contract which proved indeed one of those “long engagements” so often doomed to misfortune and disappointment. They were not to be united till, by their joint exertions, they had accumulated a sufficient sum to pay the expenses of the voyage, and supply a capital whereupon to begin with comfort their married life. Now, by an accident which had in a great measure disabled the lover from pursuing his customary avocations, much of this labour of love had been cast upon his betrothed, who, in spite of many discouragements and disadvantages on her side, had, with never-failing courage, persevered in her exertions, up to the time of her last misfortune—that of having all her little possessions stolen—when she seemed, by all accounts, at length to have been well nigh driven to despair, for to add to this distress, her lover’s unkindness —“unkindest cut of all,” began (as under the curse of absence, the most confiding lovers are

too prone to do) to doubt the alleged causes of her protracted separation, and to write bitter upbraiding letters to that effect.

“We then hear,” the learned gentleman proceeded, “that the prisoner began to sink and sicken with despair; but suddenly she receives a letter—she does not tell from whom—but saying something about an appointment with some friend, she leaves her home, and returns in a few days, all exulting happiness. She had received a supply of money sufficient for her need, but is confused and mysterious when questioned as to by whom this bounty has been bestowed. Then without further delay she had paid off her debts, procured for herself such necessities as time admitted, took leave of her friends, and proceeded to Liverpool, and was to have sailed the following morning for America. But in the meantime the notes she had circulated had been discovered to be forged, and a warrant dispatched for her detention; and the examination before the magistrates eliciting nothing from her but her declaration of innocence, and refusal to throw any light upon the facts connected with their receipt, she had been committed for trial. The notes

were then produced. They were all dated ten years back, and from the appearance of the paper bore every mark of time and long-keeping; and one circumstance was brought to bear most particularly against the prisoner, which was, that the names assigned upon the bill were those of the firm of Maynard and Co.; and the very house in which the prisoner's mother had resided for so many years as confidential servant, was that of Mr. Trevor, of Montrevor, who was at that time one of the partners in that extensive concern."

The Judge then demanded whether the prisoner's mother was not forthcoming. His lordship was then informed that she was not, as it had been ascertained that she was at that moment lying dangerously ill of a mortal disease. Evidence had however been obtained, that she had not for the last twelve years held any intercourse with her daughter.

The Judge, though considering this point unsatisfactory, forbore further comment, until he had heard the other side of the question, and Mr. Seaham, counsel for the prisoner, accordingly rose up to speak.

* * * * *

No little sensation was created by the able defence of the young barrister. The touching, though simple outline he first drew of the previous history of the accused—her character and conduct, so inconsistent with such grave delinquency as that of which she stood suspected—which he produced many witnesses to testify; all was brought admirably to bear upon the point. Even round the impenetrable cloud in which her silence wrapped the affair, he cast a silvery halo, by the manner in which he treated her conduct in this respect. The moral beauty in which he clothed the idea—the matchless constancy of that poor woman's mind, which few who had heard the details of her history, of her life, could forbear to acknowledge. Who then could feel surprised if now she stood there preferring shame, ignominy, and suspicion to the betrayal of the being who, were it friend or relation—even stranger or acquaintance—had come forward to assist her in her extremity, and though but for a moment, had stood forth in the guise of benefactor, turning her mourning into joy—throwing sunshine upon her weary path! Who could sound the depths of gratitude when once strongly called forth in the

human heart—to what even morbid extent, as he owned it might be deemed in the present case, might it not be carried? That the quality of self-preservation—self-defence was greater—many in that assembly might sneeringly assert; but for his own part—he was thankful to say such cynical lessons had not been taught him—he did think that gratitude—disinterested, heroic gratitude, was still a flower not yet quite extinct in the soil of humanity; that in the words of the poet he could assert:

“I’ve heard of hearts unkind—of hearts,
Kind deeds with ill returning;
Alas! the gratitude of men
Has often left me mourning.”

But might there not be a bond stronger even than gratitude which binds the prisoner’s tongue in a matter touching so closely her personal welfare? It was his business that day to clear his client, therefore he must add, that very insufficient light had been obtained from a quarter in which much more particular evidence was naturally to have been expected. The prisoner had a mother, which circumstance had before been mentioned, and the truth of which, (even

during the brief space of time the matter had been placed in his hands,) he made it his business to ascertain, now lying on her death-bed. Yet how could it be clearly ascertained that this mother has not assisted her daughter in her distress? indeed it seems strangely unnatural that she should not have done so throughout the long probation she had endured, and still more so in this last emergency. Was there no question as to whether the powers of natural affection might not restrain the selfish instinct of self-defence? Was there any proof, though there might be no direct knowledge, that the prisoner had not held intercourse or correspondence with the parent?

It had been stated, that the prisoner had never set foot in the house where the mother had been established so many years—that she never had received pecuniary aid from the family with whom her mother resided; yet the notes had been proved to be exact fac-similes of those delivered by the bank of Messrs. Maynard and Co., that firm to which the head of the family—whom the mother served at the time of the date of these notes—then belonged.

Arthur Seaham, as he proceeded, could not

but experience the happy consciousness of success, could not doubt from the air of satisfied approving attention pervading the large assembly in the midst of which he stood, that whatever might be the verdict of the jury as regarded his client, he was at any rate doing well for himself—that he had not overrated his own powers and abilities ; at all events he possessed one great gift of genius, the key to the hearts of men, that he had only to push bravely forward to win himself rank amongst an Eldon or an Erskine. The sun shone full upon a glaring court, upon many approving, admiring, nay, upon many tearful faces ; for there were many in court who had known young Seaham from a boy, and whose countenance held an affectionate place in their hearts and memories ; and yet, perhaps, there were but three among them all, who made any distinct and individual impression on his senses during the time, and these three inspiring feelings quite distinct from any self-pride, from any ambition in his heart.

One was the prisoner herself—that pale, patient face turned on him with such a meek and quiet confidence, as if on him she had reposed all she felt of trust in human power ;

her eyes fixed on him, her human counsellor—but her heart resting upon another alone able to defend—even on Him who had said :

“ I will never leave you, nor forsake you,”

and in whom, though he were to slay her, she would still surely trust.

The other two we may easily imagine were the faces so striking in their contrast—those two fair members of the court, who occupied convenient places behind the judge’s chair, their eyes fixed upon him ; the one all bright and beautiful in her excitement—the other becoming paler and paler from the intense and painful interest in which something in the case itself seemed more and more to enthrall her.

* * * *

At this juncture then, Arthur Seaham had arrived ; he had but just said that he had hoped for the appearance of one witness whose evidence might have thrown some important light upon the subject, and to whom he had made too late application, when a bustle was heard outside the court, and murmurs arose that this very witness had just that moment arrived.

Another instant, and Eugene Trevor made

his way into the court, pale, eager, agitated ; bearing every mark of a long and hasty journey. He approached the bench and spoke with Arthur Seaham apart, as he might have done with any other member of the bar, professionally, as if he had never spoken to him on such different matters, and in such a different character as in their interview at the London Hotel.

The young barrister returned to his seat with altered countenance, and addressing the judge, announced that the gentleman just arrived in court, had not come in the character of a witness ; but to declare facts, which at once cleared his client from all further imputations. Mr. Trevor then sworn in, declared as follows :

He had come at the dying request of the mother of the accused, to state her confession as to having delivered the forged notes to her daughter, that daughter she declared—having solemnly taken her oath of secrecy upon the Bible, being in entire ignorance of the real nature of the relief bestowed upon her, or the reason for the secrecy imposed. He then produced certificates from the medical attendants as to the dying condition of the real offender.

To what further transpired, few, beyond those especially concerned in the *éclaircissement*, paid any very particular attention; the general interest being now attracted towards the ex-prisoner, who, whilst listening with signs of strong emotion to the declaration of her innocence, had suddenly fainted, and was carried out of the court; and in a few minutes the hall was almost cleared.

It was nearly an hour before Eugene Trevor was released from the examination to which he was subjected. On leaving the court, he stopped to make inquiries for Mabel Marryott.

The official to whom he applied, informed him that the poor woman had been taken into a private room, where she had soon recovered; and then, seeming to look upon the inquirer as a privileged person, offered to conduct him to her presence.

Eugene did not decline the proposal, but followed the man, who soon arrived at the apartment, the door of which he opened, looked within, directing Eugene to enter.

The doctor had just left his patient, and she was seated in an upright position against a

chair, still faint and pale, though restored to consciousness, and receiving in her trembling hands the cordials administered by an attendant, whilst Mary Seaham and Carrie Elliott, like two ministering angels, Faith and Hope personified, hung with kind and gentle solicitude over the poor woman's chair, encouraging her fainting spirit with soothing and congratulatory words.

Well might Eugene Trevor pause at the threshold, ere he dared to introduce himself upon such a scene—into such a company. Perhaps, indeed, he might have made his escape, had not the opening of the door directed the looks of those within, ere he had time to depart unseen.

He advanced accordingly, and at once approaching his foster-sister without raising his eyes to her attendants, stooped down, and kindly, though in a confused and embarrassed manner, inquired how she felt.

The poor woman was much agitated by her foster-brother's appearance. She tried to answer, but in the attempt burst into tears, which the woman who attended her nevertheless pronounced would do her good. Then seeing

that the young ladies had already retired, Mabel Marryott signed to the woman also to withdraw ; and raising her straining eyes to Eugene's face, gasped forth :

“ My unfortunate mother ! ”

At the same time hiding her face with her hands, as if bowed down with conscious shame and humiliation at the mention of that mother's name 'before one who, she naturally supposed, regarded that mother with the scorn and abhorrence she too well merited.

But Eugene Trevor seemed to view her emotion in another light, and replied to her ejaculation by confirming with as much consideration for her feelings as the extreme case admitted, his previous information as to her mother's dangerous condition—the crisis indeed of a very painful malady under which she had been for some time labouring—speaking finally of her release from suffering as an event which could only by her friends be desired.

“ Release from suffering ! ” murmured the shuddering daughter in a low and horrified tone. “ God grant it ; God grant that it may be so, Mr. Trevor ; but alas ! my unhappy

mother ! has she seen a clergyman with a view to her spiritual relief ? does she show signs of repentance ? can we entertain hopes that her sins may be forgiven ?”

Then, to her companion’s somewhat vague and unsatisfactory answers on this point, she with renewed earnestness begged that she might at least be allowed to set out immediately for Montrevor ; and perhaps, by the mercy of God, see her mother before it was too late.

But this proposition Eugene did not encourage ; he assured her that it would be too late, that he was sorry to say there had been little chance of Mrs. Marryott’s surviving his departure many hours, that she might rest assured that everything had been done for her mother that was right and proper. He then advised Mabel Marryott rather to set about immediate arrangements for her voyage to America, for which she should have every facility. Then pressing some bank notes into her graspless hand, and desiring her to apply to him for anything more which might be required, he turned away as if to escape from any thanks his generosity might call forth from those blanched and powerless lips ; but rather, we imagine, im-

patient to cut short so painful and disagreeable an interview; and in another moment he stood by the side of Mary Seaham who, as we have said, had at his entrance withdrawn with Miss Elliott to the further end of the room.

"Mary!" he murmured in a low voice, whilst Miss Elliott, on perceiving his approach, flew back to Mabel Marryott.

"Mary, will you not speak to me?"

Mary turned towards him, and held out her hand.

"Eugene!" she said in a low agitated voice, then paused, and fixing her eyes on him with an earnest, wistful and distressful look; whilst on Eugene's side might have appeared in his countenance more of embarrassment than pleasure.

The door opened, and voices made themselves heard without. Both looked uneasily and uncomfortably towards it.

"Can I not see you, and speak to you, Mary, more privately before I leave this place? I cannot stay longer than to-day, for I am wanted at Montrevor."

"Yes, Eugene," Mary replied in the same low, hurried voice, yet with more earnest anxiety of manner. "I should like very much

to see you. If you will come this evening very late, I shall be probably alone, and we can speak together without interruption."

He pressed her hand in sign of agreement, and hastily left the room, exchanging a slight and hurried greeting with Arthur Seaham who passed upon his way.

•

CHAPTER IX.

Let after reckonings trouble fearful fools ;
I'll stand the trial of these trivial crimes.

DRYDEN.

The time shall come, nor long remote, when thou
Shall feel far more than thou inflicttest now ;
Feel for thy vile self-loving self in vain,
And turn thee howling in unpitied pain.

BYRON.

To explain the chief incidents of the last chapter, it is our necessary, though repellent task to retrograde some six months past, and enter the gloomy mansion of Montrevor, where all that time its infirm master lay, like a chained enchanter on his bed of sickness.

His son had late that day left for London, amply supplied with those funds to supply his exigencies, which he had little difficulty now in

drawing from the resources of the now powerless old dotard.

A few hours later, when darkness had closed in, and the house was hushed and still, a woman's form was seen issuing from the old man's chamber.

It was Mabel Marryott. She was changed from the day we last saw her, sailing along the passages of Montrevor. She came forward with a slow, uncertain step, holding a shawl wrapped loosely over her breast; and the lamp she carried in the other hand showed her countenance to bear a sick and ghastly expression, betokening the painful disease through which she finally perished, to have already laid its sharp fangs on her system.

But though bodily strength might be subdued, no mental debilitation seemed the consequence. She went straight forward to the door of her master's library; entering without a pause of fear, or conscious stricken awe, that gloomy haunt of many sinful and accusing memories, she shut the door behind her, placed the lamp upon a table and sat down to rest, her eyes wandering deliberately round the room fearing little to encounter the spiritual shades of

the past—the meek upbraiding of one wronged being’s saintly eyes—the noble scorn—the scathing indignation of another’s. She feared not yet either angel or spirit, her day of fear was yet to come. She looked round with a keen scrutinizing glance of survey, and then she rose and went composedly to work ; she had the field to herself, and one master-key which the old man had managed to keep concealed even from his son, she had contrived by strict vigilance to discover the hiding-place, and get into her possession.

“Thou fool !” might have seemed the utterance of her heart, as with a look of fiendish mockery she flung open the depository into which she thus found entrance, and viewed the glittering treasures it contained. “Thou fool ! thou hast indeed many goods laid up for many years, and this night—perhaps this night, this very night, thy dotard soul may be required of thee.”

“Thou fool ! how long hast *thou* to live,” the spirit of air might have echoed in *her* ear, as the woman proceeded on her work of iniquity.

But strange the insane delusion by which

each man would seem to deem all men mortal but themselves. Even with that fatal malady gnawing on her very vitals. Mabel Marryott trusting in an arm of flesh, confidant in human skill, was laying in store for herself many years of anticipatory pleasure, ease, and competence.

With a well-filled purse of gold, she then had for the present turned away content — gold which the old man she thought would never rise from his bed to demand, and of which his heirs could guess only the existence; and thus she would have departed, had not her quick eye suddenly discovered a secret recess, which from the difficulty she had in opening it, more keenly excited her curiosity and interest.

By dint of much trouble and exertion the aperture finally yielded, and a heap of papers, which had to all appearance been carelessly thrust in together, was the issue of her research. They were bank-notes. One after another, she read the tempting numbers—hesitated—replaced them, and finally divided and pocketed the half.

Two hours after this deed had been perpetrated, some one came knocking gently at the door of Mr. Trevor's chamber, to which Mrs. Marryott had returned to inform her that a

young woman had arrived, desiring to speak with her. Mrs. Marryott kept the person waiting some little time for she was giving Mr. Trevor his arrow-root; but at length went down to her sitting-room, where she found a woman of decent appearance though poorly attired, seated patiently awaiting her coming; a dark cloak wrapped around her, and a large bonnet and veil nearly concealing her face.

On perceiving Marryott she rose, and to the inquiry: "What was her business?" the stranger put back her veil, and showing her pale and anxious countenance, in tremulous accents murmured: "Mother!"

Surprise was at first strongly depicted on Marryott's countenance; but the next instant the hard impenetrable expression of her face returned, in a cold measured tone she demanded what it might be that brought her there?

"Mother; have you no words of kindness to give your daughter?" faltered the poor woman.

"Words of kindness—pshaw! is that all you have come this long way for," the other answered impatiently.

"Alas! no mother," was the sorrowful reply,

drooping her head despairingly ; “ but if you have not even those to give me, how can I ask for more.”

“ More ! ah, I thought so—I thought that pride would have a fall at last : that you would put your virtue into your pocket, and be coming one day crawling on your knees to beg a morsel of bread, or a hole in this house, from the mother who was not *good* enough for you some years ago. So I suppose your lover won’t have you now that you are old and ugly—bah ! don’t think that I will take you in here ; if this house was not good enough for you *then*, it’s none the better *now*. At any rate there’s no place in it for you, so you must go back from whence you came.”

“ Mother, mother—do not speak so cruelly—do not blame me, if knowing what was good and what was evil, I could not come to live here, hearing of you what I did. But alas ! my spirit indeed waxeth faint, and my strength faileth me. I am worn out with useless labour, and I come to ask a little help from the mother who bore me, trusting that God will forgive both her and me, for we have all sinned—all stand in need of forgiveness. * * Yes, I come to ask for a little help to take me to

America—to Henry Wilson, who still waits for and expects me.”

“Oh, that’s it,”—with a scornful laugh—
“it’s money you want; those ‘wages of iniquity,’ which you scorned at so finely long ago.”

“Mother—those were strong words perhaps for a daughter so young to use towards a mother, but my heart was grieved for you; it was in sorrowful affection, not undutiful scorn, that I thus spoke.”

Mabel Marryott sat down—she had hitherto remained coldly standing—and signed to her daughter to do the same. The submissive manner Jane had assumed, probably in a degree mollifying her hardened spirit; or rather perhaps it was a sort of triumph, to see her virtuous child thus brought low before her. She had quite lived down any womanly or maternal feeling; and would probably, without the slightest compunction, have turned her from the door penniless as she came: yet something—perhaps the idea that it would be disagreeable and degrading to her high pretensions, to have that poor, shabby creature coming begging at the house as her daughter—made her calculate that it might be a better plan to

get rid of her at once—easily as it was in her power now to accomplish it. Those notes still in her pocket, she had begun already to repent not having left them in their hiding place—bank notes were terrible things to meddle with, but at any rate no harm could come of their being put in use by one under Jane Marryott's circumstances.

In short, it ended as we all know by those twice guilty papers being transferred into the hands of the innocent; and Jane Marryott—bound by the promise of strict secrecy, which she so resolutely maintained inviolate—left the house without any member of the household having been made aware of her identity, with the un-blessed cause of fresh misfortune in her possession. With the unhappy sequel we are acquainted.

* * * * *

Six months had passed, and Mabel Marryott lay groaning on a bed of agony. The pains of hell truly had got hold of her, and conscience—faint foretaste of the never dying worm, rose up to torment her “before her time,” with the dark catalogue of remembered sin—sin unrepented, and therefore unforgiven. She would

not turn to the one sure fountain, open for sin and for uncleanness. She even repulsed all offers of spiritual ministration from those members of the household who had thought and feeling, to see the awful nature of the dying woman's position.

"No, she wanted no clergymen, they could avail her nothing—could not undo one of the sins she had committed." But at length one day, she sent to desire Eugene Trevor would come himself and speak to her in private. He came, and lifting herself up with difficulty in her bed, she turned her ghastly countenance towards her foster-son as he stood by her side, and fixing her sunken eyes upon him, addressed him thus:

"Eugene Trevor, my daughter is to be tried this week at —— for forgery."

"So I was sorry to hear, Mabel; but there seems, I think, every chance of her being acquitted."

"Chance—yes; but I am not going to leave it to chance, and die with this too on my conscience. I have been a bad mother from the first, I forsook the child at my breast for the hire of a stranger, and cast her on the world to shift for herself in toil and trouble; and last of

all, by my stolen charity have brought this curse upon her. Yes, Eugene Trevor," she added, emphatically, "I stole those notes from your father's chest, and gave them to the girl—but who *forged* them?"

Eugene Trevor started as if an adder had stung him ; and turning ashy pale, sunk down upon a chair that stood near.

"What—what in the name of Heaven do you mean, Marryott?" he stammered forth.

"Eugene Trevor, do not try to deceive a dying woman. I have confessed my part of the business, do not deny yours. There was not much which passed between you and your father that night ten years ago, that I did not overhear, and which now put together, would be enough to commit *you*—but do not fear, I am not going to betray you, only do my bidding ; go to —— and get that girl free—it matters little to me, who shall be dead perhaps, before the morning, what I'm thought of ; go and tell them that *I* gave the notes, and that *she* was ignorant of this falsity—go, get her off, and come back and tell me she is free, and I die silent ; if not, as sure as I lie here a dying woman, I send for a magistrate and tell him all."

Eugene Trevor's discomfiture and perturbation at this disclosure may be imagined. He had been surprised at the time of her apprehension, to see the account of Jane Marryott's examination in the papers, but Mabel had professed such perfect ignorance on the subject—such careless indifference concerning the trouble of her daughter, that though the coincidence of the notes might strike him as singular, it scarcely occurred to him as possible that those half-forgotten instruments of his youthful crime, which he had not for a moment doubted his father immediately destroyed, could possibly have fallen into the prisoner's hands.

There was nothing to be done but to obey his accuser's wishes, knowing well the determined spirit of that fearful woman, so that there would be no other way of preventing her, even with her dying lips, declaring the part he had in the dark transaction in question. He therefore took all necessary precautions and started on his critical commission with as little delay as possible, receiving before his departure, the formal summons from Arthur Seaham to attend as witness on the trial.

CHAPTER X.

Ah, Zelica ! there was a time, when bliss
Shone o'er thy heart from every look of his ;
When but to see him, hear him breathe the air
In which he dwelt was thy soul's fondest prayer ;
When round him hung such a perpetual spell,
Whate'er he did, none ever did so well.
Too happy days ! when, if he touch'd a flower
Or gem of thine, 'twas sacred from that hour.

LALLA ROOKH.

MARY SEAHAM sat alone that same evening by the hotel room fire, expecting Eugene Trevor.

She had told him to come late, because by that time, she knew that her brother, with Judge Elliott's party, would have gone to the county ball held that night in the town ; and that the important interview with him, who still deemed himself her lover, might take place without interruption.

Mary had not told her brother of the appointment she had made ; so fearful was she that any obstacle should occur to impede or prevent the anxious purpose she had formed. Yet now that the carriage containing Arthur, the radiant Carrie, and their chaperon had driven from the door, and she knew that Eugene at any moment, might be announced, her heart began to fail her, and she almost repented of what she had undertaken. What was she going to do or say—what part pursue ?

A dark and bewildered maze seemed to lie before her, and she sat there, pale and trembling at every sound, something grasped convulsively in her hand, her eyes fixed with a dark and anxious gaze upon the flickering fire-flame.

Times indeed were changed, since in serene and quiet happiness, Mary had so often waited at Silverton for her lover's approach. No one could have imaged forth an intended love-tryst from her aspect now. Yet the critical moment came. Eugene entered—the door closed behind him, and once more they were alone together. Mary having resumed her seat, with blanched lips and beating heart—he standing on the hearth-rug looking down upon her like as he

had done on that memorable occasion of the first declaration of his love—that beginning of so much happiness—but greater misery to Mary. Alas! was this to be its end?

He began to speak hurriedly of the length of time since they had met, of the strange circumstances of their *rencontre* that day; Mary listening as to a voice speaking in a dream, and assenting mechanically, till finally, as he alluded more particularly to the circumstances of the case, mentioning the name of Mabel Marryott and the astounding facts which had transpired concerning that old—he had almost said *faithful* but he substituted long-established servant of the family. Then the pure blood mounted for a moment to Mary's brow, leaving something like a stern and calm resolution on her countenance; whilst to Eugene Trevor's somewhat complacent communication, as to what he had done for the daughter, the measures he had taken to secure her from further trouble and delay in the accomplishment of her emigration, she listened grave and unmoved, as if she deemed his proceedings in this respect had been but what was strictly due to the innocent sufferer of so much iniquity.

Yes, darker and darker seemed to grow the picture before Mary's eyes that house and home presented, of which she had once contemplated with such innocent satisfaction and happy anticipation becoming the mistress. Sin after sin, more or less strange and terrible to her startled spirit, rose up to scare and to repel her; so much so, that to think that one to whom she had been devoted, should have amalgamated himself even in a passive character with the influence of such a foul and infected atmosphere, was horrible to her feelings, and most 'blessed' indeed in comparison—"when men shall revile you and cast you out of their company"—appeared to her the persecuted in such a case.

Was it that some outward manifestation of these inward impressions revealed themselves upon her countenance, that Eugene regarded her with that keen and scrutinizing expression, as for a moment her eyes were, with a care-worn abstracted look, cast downwards upon the ground.

"Now, Mary, let me hear something of yourself," he suddenly exclaimed, breaking off his former topic of discourse; "what have you been doing since I saw you last?"

Mary did not return the question ; she did not ask "What have *you* been doing?" but as she looked up into her lover's face, what was it that made it impossible to return the smile, the glance, with which he awaited the reply? What was it that made her turn away her eyes with a pang—almost a shudder at her heart? Alas! what new impression did she receive from looking on that face, which had been to her the beloved dream, the haunting vision of her youth.

Was it come to this. Had absence changed her heart? Had it become strange, untrue, towards her early love? Did she turn her eyes away from her lover's face because his cheek was haggard, his brow sunken, and his eye lost the brightness of those days when

"The sunshine of her life was in those eyes."

Ah, no! she felt that this was not the case. Had she but read signs of grief, of sickness, written there, and her heart would have gone forth to soothe and sympathize with all the truth and fervour of the past.

But no, it was none of these which had laid their signet there. Alas for her enlightened eyes! she felt it was not sorrow—not sickness—

but sin ; that no cloud had settled on his brow which she could have dared the fond attempt to pierce ; and agony to think that it should have come to this ; that she should be seated at his side, and feel it were not possible that she could lay her weary head upon that lover's arm, place her hand in his, with the love and confidence with which she had even yearned towards another.

But this had been the vague and passing reflection of a second. With scarcely perceptible pause she had softly replied :

"I have done little, Eugene, which would count for much in your varied and busy existence. The most important feature in my own consideration has been an excursion to Italy, which I took last summer with my brother."

Mary's voice trembled nervously as she uttered these last words, for she felt that now had come an opportunity she must not neglect, for leading on to the critical subject on which she had to speak : and, as if to support her desperate purpose, unclasped the little trinket-case she had all this time still held concealed in the palm of her delicate hand.

"To Italy ! oh, indeed," was Eugene's

reply. "I was very nearly going there at the same time ; it was just a chance that I did not. My father's illness, a constant tie upon my movements, prevented me at the last moment ; how delightful it would have been if we had met."

Mary made no reply, but looked down still with that peculiar expression which could not but strike Eugene as ominous of something of an important and peculiar nature.

"And you were charmed, I suppose," he proceeded, perusing her countenance with increasing interest and attention ; "so much so that I fear you would scarcely have considered my society as an addition to your enjoyment ; you have learnt to live too well without me, I am afraid, Mary."

That low and flattering tone of other days thrilled Mary's heart, and flushed her cheek with emotions as of old ; but gently removing the hand which for an instant she passively yielded to his pressure, she did not raise her eyes as once she would have done, in tender rebuke at the unjust assumption—she did not say how wearisome and dark had life become without him—how void, wasted and incomplete !

—but hurriedly, as if she feared the working of the olden spell, and the consequent melting away of her sterner resolution, she started forward upon the anxious theme weighing on her heart.

“I met with a strange adventure at Tivoli, Eugene; it was about that I wished most particularly to speak to you. One morning, as I was walking out early, I found this ring upon the ground;” and as she spoke she produced the signet from the case, and held it towards him. “You may imagine how surprised I was to see your initials, and your crest; I scarcely knew indeed what to think, till walking on a little further I overtook—Mr. Temple!”

Her listener, who had at first taken the ring wonderingly from her hand; as she proceeded, raised it to the light, and then abruptly, as if for the purpose of closer examination, he started up and approached the candle.

He uttered not a word, but had his face not been turned away, it might have been seen to have changed to an ashy hue.

“I was surprised,” Mary proceeded, “for though the initials were thus accounted for, the crest being yours seemed too unlikely a

coincidence; indeed I had previously cherished a vague but wild idea that it might possibly belong to your brother, and that his long-wished for recovery was at hand."

She paused, but no comment on her words, no reply, but an almost fiercely impatient interrogative: "Well?" as he turned his countenance, but not his eyes, round upon her, proceeded from his lips.

"Well, you see I was disappointed," her mild voice resumed more firmly, now that she had launched upon the critical theme beyond recall. "At least," she added, with a wistful earnest glance, "I found, as I said before, that it had been dropped by Mr. Temple. Oh, Eugene! how came it in his possession—that ring, that impression which I remember to have seen upon a letter—that fatal letter which seemed to have been the beginning of so much sorrow and annoyance. Oh! what is this mysterious connection subsisting between you and Mr. Temple? tell me—tell me truly—faithfully—what is it that makes this signet with your arms, your crest, his also?"

Eugene Trevor burst into a forced and insulting laugh.

"Good Heavens, Mary! why not ask that question of Temple himself? how in the world am I to tell whether it might have been begged, borrowed, or stolen by the clerical impostor? Stolen most likely—as I can pretty plainly perceive," fixing on her face a keen and cynical look of scrutiny; "he has managed to steal something else besides. Yes," he continued, "I begin to understand now the secret of the cold looks and measured words with which, after so long a separation, I am received by you, Mary. I see what this excursion to Italy has done for me. It is *I* who ought to ask questions, I think. You saw a great deal of Temple, I conclude, after the first adventure?"

Though Eugene endeavoured to assume a tone of irritated suspicion natural to a man whose jealousy was not unreasonably awakened, there was a look of dark and eager anxiety in his countenance which could not be concealed.

"Yes," Mary continued in a tolerably firm voice, though she had turned a little pale at her lover's implied accusation, "circumstances certainly did throw us together—circumstances neither of his seeking or my own."

A fierce fiery expression shot from Eugene's eye.

"Oh, they did!" he exclaimed, taking refuge in the passionate burst of rage in which his feelings found vent. "I thought so; and this is his most honourable, most virtuous mode of proceeding, insinuating himself into your society, inveigling your affections by his heroic sanctity, and poisoning your ear by base and interested insinuations against myself—if he wishes to circulate his malicious lies, why not speak them out plainly like a man—not send you to attack me in this manner with that accursed ring?" dashing the signet forcibly to the ground.

"Eugene!" interposed Mary, "these reflections on the most honourable and upright of men are unfounded and unjust. There was nothing in the nature of our intercourse with which the most jealous could find fault. He, Mr. Temple, was in a manner forced into joining my brother and myself during a short excursion, by an old friend, Mr. Wynne, with whom he was travelling, and at last parted from us abruptly. As to the rest it is I alone on whom your displeasure need fall; it was by

my anxious importunity alone—which he tried in vain to evade—that I drew from him all that I learnt on a subject on which it has become necessary to the peace and quiet of my spirit, that I should be more clearly enlightened. He told me that his lips were sealed upon the points on which I questioned him; but that some mystery does exist—some mystery respecting your brother, Eugene, some mystery in which you yourself, and indeed he Mr. Temple, are strangely, closely confused—is most certain. And then he gave me back that ring, and referred me to you for a true and faithful relation of all I so anxiously desired to ascertain; or for your sake, as well as my own, to bid you farewell for ever. Oh, Eugene! disperse then, I implore you, this dark, bewildering cloud, for I cannot, cannot walk on any more groping in this darkness. Think of me what you please—wrong my motives if you will, but only show me the truth whatever it may be; or, Eugene,” she added, faintly, her voice melted into a tone of mingled compassion and concern, “I must indeed put an end at once to my ceaseless perplexity, by bidding you farewell for ever.”

Eugene Trevor was calm now, though still livid with the passion into which he had excited himself. He sat down, close to Mary's side, and there was a dogged air of resolution expressed in his countenance.

"I am willing to tell anything that you may wish to ask," he said sarcastically, to tear off any part of this delightful veil of mystery in which you have been pleased to invest my deeds and actions, for the benefit of your romantic imagination. So pray begin your catechism."

"Your brother?" was the faint and faltering interrogatory, which came from Mary's lips.

Eugene Trevor's assumed calmness vanished; he started up, and approached the fire-place, murmuring hoarsely:

"Well, what of him?"

"Where is he? Who is he? How is it that he does not return or appear in England—in the world? What has he to do with Mr. Temple? For that some mysterious link does exist between those two; I have for sometime had suspicions which I can no longer quell, or put aside as imaginary and vain—by night as well as by day I have been haunted by wild, strange

dreams that Mr. Temple and your brother are the same."

She paused aghast, for she had risen and approached Eugene in her excitement, and now stood gazing as Adah might have gazed upon the face of her husband Cain, when for the first time his countenance was revealed to her in all its undisguised hatred and wrathfulness of expression.

"Eugene!" she murmured, her voice melting into a tone of mingled surprize, compassion and concern. "Eugene!" and she laid her hand soothingly on his arm.

He turned his eyes, flashing defiance upon her.

"Well," he cried, "and if they were, pray, what of that?"

"If—if" she cried, returning his gaze unshrinkingly, "then—then your brother, Eugene, should not *now*—never should have been a banished exile from his home and heritage. They have wronged him basely, who ever, on the plea of madness, deprived such a man of honour, hope and happiness. Farewell indeed, Eugene, if this *could* be the case. Farewell, at least, till you have repaired your grievous error,

and restored Eustace Trevor to all which has been wrongfully, deceitfully taken from him."

She turned away, but Eugene Trevor seized her hand.

"Stop, Mary," he said in a low voice of subdued and concentrated rage. "Stop, if you please, and hear *me*. You may remember, you said, a little time ago, farewell, *if* I did not reveal to you all you desired to know. I have told you nothing yet, though you seem indeed too ready to conclude every thing of the blackest and most preposterous description against me. But although you are so eager for any excuse to rid yourself of me, for ever; though the heart you once swore would scarcely have been torn from me, were I proved to be the greatest villain upon earth, has shown itself a very woman's in its weakness, its feebleness, its inconstancy. Yes, Mary, villain as you may wish to consider me, *I* preserve at least the virtue of *constancy*. I love you as much as ever, Mary. I will not give you up. What," he exclaimed, fixing his eyes upon her pale and startled countenance, and advancing towards her as she sunk down upon a sofa, "do you own yourself, false and faithless, enough to wish that I should do

so? Do you now love this Eustace, this Temple, whatever he may please to call himself?"

"Eugene!" gasped Mary's blanched lips.

"Answer me, Mary, or rather prove it. I see indeed that our marriage has been deferred too long; promise me, *swear*, that it shall take place secretly; there is nothing now that should impede it. I can manage my father now, that that woman will be out of the way. You know, Mary—you cannot wonder that I should have considered her presence as an objection to your entrance into my father's house; the obstacle will now be removed."

But Mary shrank back with shuddering repugnance at the suggestion thus presented to her delicate imagination. *She* invited to take the place of Mabel Marryott—*she* to have room made for her within her lover's home, by the removal of such a being.

"Mary, you are not—you cannot own yourself so faithless and so false as to love that other man."

"No—Eugene—no. What right have you to entertain such a suspicion? but you—you have not told me what I required."

"But I *will* tell you, Mary—I will tell you

everything. I will redeem—I will atone for all that I may have done—I will lay my fate in your hands—I will yield my future conduct, my every action, to your guidance and direction. As your husband, I shall be content to give up all, whatsoever your wishes may cost me. But I will wait no longer ; say you will be my wife, Mary : and I swear to fulfil whatever you may impose upon me.”

He had passed his arm with a kind of reckless excitement round her waist, and now held her tightly towards him, so that her heart beat wildly against his own, though she shrank trembling from the close embrace, and still he repeated, with a voice which sounded to her ear more like hatred than affection :

“ Say—promise me, you will marry me in a week, Mary, publicly or in secret, as you will ; you are your own mistress, no one can prevent you. Speak, say that one word, Mary, and you shall hear everything as truly as if I stood before the judgment-seat of God.”

But Mary’s lips could not utter a reply, her breath seemed choked, a mist was before her eyes, though the once most beloved face on

earth was bending down upon her, so near that his very breath fanned her cheek. She saw it, but as in a frightful dream changed into the face of a demon, and she felt that breath to be upon her brow like a burning and a blighting flame. Yet in the strange terror, the perplexity of feeling which had come over her, a kind of fascination, which something in that dark, lurid glance fixed so steadfastly upon her, seemed to enthrall her senses. She might perhaps, had it been possible, have forced her lips to give the required promise. But though they moved, they uttered no sound. She grew paler and paler, more and more heavily she pressed against the retaining arm which encircled her, till finally her head lay back on the cushion of the couch; and Eugene Trevor started at perceiving her closed eyes and ghastly countenance, released her from his hold, for she had fainted!

CHAPTER XII.

For thee I panted, thee I prized,
For thee I gladly sacrificed
Whate'er I loved before ;
And shall I see thee start away,
And helpless, hopeless, hear thee say—
Farewell! we meet no more.

COWPER.

EUGENE TREVOR's first impulse was to step back shocked and amazed ; but the first parox-ism of passion into which he had worked himself, in a degree cooled by this unlooked for catastrophe, he felt that he had acted in a weak and unreasonable manner.

Yes, to say that he stood there, looking on that good and gentle being, whose pitiful condition only showed the climax to which he had distressed and unnerved her guileless spirit, by the course of conduct he had so unjustifiably

pursued—the peace and happiness of whose life he had so selfishly blighted.

That he had looked on her thus, and thought chiefly of himself, was but too true a proof of the purity and genuineness of the feelings, which had prompted him to press upon her their union in so urgent and unjustifiable a manner.

Yes—dark and perplexing considerations as to the position of his own affairs came crowding upon his mind. Mary's suspicions, nay, even amounting to certainty, as to his brother's identity, he had himself recklessly confirmed; but that mattered little, for suspicion once awakened on the subject, the truth in any case, must sooner or later have transpired.

No, he should have long ago have broken off with Mary, as his brother had required; that would have been the only means of keeping that mad enthusiast quiet till his father's death, and his own affairs satisfactorily settled. What infatuation had kept him hankering after that "mess of pottage," which after all, he felt had become far less valuable to him, than all that had been risked through its cause. He had been in love with Mary Seaham three years ago; then he was really and truly in love—in love

with her sweet youth—her gentle excellence; and could he then have made her his wife without the trouble and annoyance to which the engagement had since subjected him, he had little doubt that the step would have been for his happiness and benefit; but as it had turned out, he should have long since have given up the inauspicious business—the strength and purity of his affection had not been such as could stand the test of their protracted separation. The crystal stream would soon have palled upon his vitiated taste, had it not been for the excitement of opposition, and the triumph over his brother it procured him.

Added to this, we must in justice say, there had ever remained in Eugene's heart at all times—and under every circumstance, a sort of fascinated feeling towards Mary which had never been wholly extinguished—an influence over his nature wonderful even to himself. But this was nothing to the disquieting fears which now assailed him for the future; he could not well see his way before him, and impatiently—with feelings in which every bad passion was combined, he turned away from the poor girl, who lay there so wan and faded before him; in this

moment of excitement, considering her but as the source of the disturbance and perplexity, in which through her, he had involved himself. With but one more glance, therefore, at the pale, prostrate form, he rang the bell with careless violence; and leaving the room, contented himself with desiring the servant whom he met hurrying to obey the summons, to send Miss Seaham's maid to her, and hastily quitted the house.

In no happy mood of mind, Eugene Trevor regained his own hotel, and having made inquiries as to conveyances, started by the night mail from —, and reached Montrevor the following afternoon.

His first inquiry was for Marryott. He was told that she had expired soon after his departure. "Had any one been with her?" he asked.

"No one; they had supposed her to be asleep for some hours; but at length she had been found by the housemaid who took up her gruel, stiff and cold."

Yes—the sin of that hardened and unrighteous woman had surely found her out. The curse breathed from the pale, meek features of the corpse of her, whose angel heart she had crushed and broken—whose death she had rendered lone

and desolate as her life, had come back "on her her bosom with reflected blight," she too had breathed forth her expiring sigh in agony unrelieved.

But who wept over her remains—who cared for, who mourned her death? not one within that mansion. Old Mr. Trevor heard of the event, with the satisfaction of a child released from the dominion of a harsh attendant, and took advantage of his disenthralment to creep from his chamber to his study, to enjoy the long restricted luxury of gloating over his beloved treasures; and from whence, overcome by that unwonted exertion, he had but just been carried back to his chamber by his servant, who had discovered him thus employed, when his son arrived.

Eugene's first act was to order the property of Marryott to be submitted to his inspection, and he had but just satisfied himself of there being no more forged notes in her possession, when the officers of the crown employed to make inquiries into the business, arrived at Montrevor.

Their examination of the deceased's effects proved, of course, equally unproductive, as was

every inquiry which was afterwards made. A few questions put to the bewildered Mr. Trevor, to whose presence Eugene tremblingly admitted the officials, showed him incompetent to give any available evidence. Their warrant went no further.

With the death of the self-accused offender, ended every possibility of further enlightenment. She had gone to give an account of her actions to a Judge from before whom all hearts are open and no secrets are hid ; and who require no human testimony to decide His just and terrible judgment.

They departed, and Eugene breathed more freely, though far was the removal of this one weight of anxiety from leaving peace and comfort at his heart. The gloom and darkness which brooded over the house of sin and death, lay with a leaden weight upon his soul. For the first time he seemed to be sensible of the foulness of the atmosphere in which for years he had breathed so contentedly—the dark maze in which he had entangled himself. Perhaps it was the influence of *her* presence, which even still, as it had ever done, exercised a power over

his feelings—a wish, a transitory yearning for better, purer things; for happiness such as he had never tasted in his world of sensuality.

From whatever it might have arisen, certainly his was no enviable frame of mind, and in the perplexity of the moment he was almost prompted to relax his immediate hold of all his anxious schemes and purposes; put his father under proper guardianship, and leaving the house, the country, for a time, abandon the issue to the future—to fate. If the old man died soon, well and good; he knew his present will would secure him the bulk of his large and long accumulated unentailed property. If he lingered on for years, why even then, he little feared his brother taking advantage of his absence. No, not his brother perhaps, but his friends. Might they not rise up in Eustace Trevor's behalf; and the old man become, as in his present state he was likely to do, a ready tool in their hands, to effect his ruin—for ruin to him any alteration in that will must prove—that will made under his own auspices; at the same time that the deed was executed, which in favour of his brother's alleged incompetency, put all power into his hands, with regard to the management of the entailed property.

No, he must retain his post even to the death, and above all he must gain assurance as to the security of the deed, on which so much depended, and which it had been necessary to humour the old man, at the time, in the whim of keeping secreted in his own possession, without the farther security of a copy—a legal expense against which, he had strongly protested. There was another point too on which he was still painfully anxious. Were the remainder of those forged notes, which his father had evidently neglected to destroy, still in existence, and in the same place from which the rest had been extracted?

With these thoughts on his mind, Eugene went to his father, and with the usual address of which he was full master, broke to him the nature and the cause of the intrusion with which he had that day been terrified and annoyed—in short the whole history of Marryott's share in the forgery case, the origin of which he recalled to his darkened recollection.

The old man was confounded and dismayed—his old panic as regarded his son's youthful delinquency reviving in full force. He, however, held out still, that the notes had been des-

troyed, and that Marryott must have been a witch to have restored them to existence.

Eugene combated the folly of this idea, at the same time impressing upon him the necessity of ascertaining the better security of any papers of importance, than Marryott's abstraction of the forged notes, proved them to be in at the present moment.

For that purpose he conducted the miserable old man to his study, or rather private room ; and with great difficulty induced him to go through an examination under his inspection of all places he thought it likely, the will and the remainder of the notes might be secreted.

But the old man's cunning avarice was a match for the younger one's cupidity.

He had his own peculiar feelings with respect to the will. A jealous tenacity in preserving to the last his power over the disposal of his riches, however other powers might have departed from him, and as to giving up his will to Eugene, that he would never do. He knew where it lay snug and secret, and if Eugene treated him ill, and stole the money over which even now his eyes gloated, and his hands passed so graspingly,

he knew what he could do, and as for the notes, he had in truth forgotten that secret hiding-place.

So the search ended for that day without the desired results, for the old man grew faint and feeble, and said he could do no more that time, but would continue the search on the morrow, so, content for the present, his son supported him back to his chamber. He did not leave his bed for the following week, before the end of which period Mabel Marryott was carried out to be buried. And there she lies—the same sun which shines upon the evil and the good, gleams upon the decent stone which perpetuates the dishonoured memory of the wicked—as upon the tomb of mocking grandeur, in which the weary had found rest—that rest “which remaineth for the people of God.”

CHAPTER XIII.

Desolate in each place of trust,
Thy bright soul dimmed with care,
To the land where is found no trace of dust.
Oh ! look thou there.

THE servant had either not understood, or had neglected the orders of Eugene Trevor. Her own faithful attendant had not accompanied Mary, and Miss Elliott's maid, who waited upon her, had gone to the hall to be in attendance in the cloak-room upon her young lady. So that when the poor girl recovered from her temporary insensibility, she found herself quite alone, and nearly in darkness with but a dim and bewildered recollection of what had occurred, the sense of physical indisposition preponderating at the moment. She feebly

arose, and managed to drag her chilled and heavy limbs to her own room.

In the morning she awoke restored to a full consciousness of the reality of the last night's events ; very dark appeared to her the world on which she opened now her eyes ; a vague sense of misery oppressed her—a feeling as if the end of all things was come—that the truth, light and beauty of existence had passed from her for ever—that her life had been thrown away—the best powers of her mind—the affections of her heart wasted on an object suddenly stripped of every false attribute which she had so ignorantly worshipped.

She did not feel inclined, as may be supposed, to face the glare and bustle of the court, and under plea of a headache excused herself from accompanying Miss Elliott and her brother, who, having been obliged to be in attendance at an early hour, had only exchanged a few words with his sister at her room-door previous to his departure.

Mary would, therefore, have been left alone all the morning had it not been for a visit from Jane Marryott, who came to say farewell ; and to express her grateful thanks, both for the

aid she had received from her legal advocate and the kindness shown to her by the young ladies after the trial.

Mary received her with much kindness, and encouraged her by the sweet sympathy of her manner, to relate "the tale of her love with all its pains and reverses." There was something in the subdued and chastened tone of the poor woman's happiness, as soothing to Mary's own troubled heart, as her meek and patient demeanour during her affliction had been touching; and as to look upon the "grief so lonely" of her upon whose patient countenance she had read a tale of baffled hopes, and disappointed affection, which had made her think with tears upon her own; so now she did not feel it impossible to accede a smile of melancholy rejoicing in her pious joy, though no answering chord vibrated in her own sorrowful bosom—and she felt that the sea of trouble, and the ocean wide, which had hitherto disunited Jane Marryott from her affianced lover, was nothing to the deep gulf which must, from henceforth, roll between her soul and his, whom she had so long looked upon in that light.

But the faint mournful smile did not perhaps

escape the observation of her humble visitor, or fail to touch the scarce less delicate sympathies of one doubly refined in the furnace of affliction. Jane Marryott could not repress a glance of anxious interest on the pale young lady's face, as at the close of her own recital, she respectfully proceeded to express her wishes for the health and happiness of her brother and herself.

She had heard, she continued timidly to say, that Mr. Eugene Trevor was the favoured gentleman who was to make Miss Seaham his wife—then paused, humbly apologising if she had offended by her boldness, for she marked the momentary spasm of painful emotion which passed over Mary's countenance.

She would not have ventured to speak on the subject she added, had it not been for the interest, painful though it had become in its character, which bound her to that family. Mr. Eugene Trevor being as Miss Seaham probably was aware, her foster-brother.

Mary bent her head in sign of acquiescence, and then murmuring that Jane Marryott had not offended, enquired in a low and faltering voice if she had been thrown much in contact with the Trevor family of late years, that if

so, she would be much obliged by any particulars respecting it: she need not fear to speak freely on a subject which indeed was one of such peculiar interest to herself, though not now in the manner to which Jane had made allusion. She had indeed been long engaged to Mr. Eugene Trevor, but—. Mary felt not strength to complete the communication; her voice died away, leaving her listener to frame her own conclusions from the dejected pause and broken sentence.

“ I would do anything to oblige or serve you, dear young lady, though there is little on the subject of that family which can be connected in my mind but with shame and sorrow. However, with the exception of one unhappy visit of mine to Montrevor last year, I have not entered the house, or lived in its neighbourhood, since I was quite a young child; then I remember just having been taken there once or twice to see my mother, and being allowed to play with little Master Eugene, and most distinctly of all going with him into the room where was Mrs. Trevor—such a sweet and gentle looking lady—who spoke very kindly to me; and there too was Master Eustace, a beautiful boy, who seemed

very fond of his mother, whilst Master Eugene would not do a thing that he was bid—he was but a child then you know,” she added apologetically, “and they say was never taught much to love and honour that parent, by those who took him as an infant from her breast. Alas! that I, my mother’s own child, should have to say it—but such visits were not many; my mother did not care for me enough to run the risk of offending her master by having me about the place. He hated strange children in the house, and when I was taken there it was by stealth. So at a very early age I was sent away to some distant relations in Wales, who apprenticed me to the trade, and all I have since heard of the family has been by hearsay; for there was nothing of all that reached my ear, which made Montrevor a place I could have visited with any comfort or pleasure.

“My mother, when I had grown up, offered me a situation in the establishment, and because I refused to accept it, speaking my mind perhaps too freely, she never afterwards noticed me in any way, withdrawing all support in my necessity; till the unlucky hour, I was induced to give up that patient waiting on God’s own

time I had hitherto maintained, and turned aside to seek to bring it to pass by ways and means that were not of his pointing out. I might have seen that no good could have come out of gold taken from that house, no blessing be attached to bounty drawn from such a polluted source. God has been very merciful, and made all things to work together for my good; but still even now I rejoice with trembling, and were he again to withdraw his favour—I should only feel that it were due to my past unfaithfulness. Oh, dear young lady! it is a good thing to wait patiently on the Lord, to believe that good is hid behind every cloud of seeming evil; that grief or disappointment, if dealt us, is intended for our future happiness either here or hereafter. May you find this to be the case, and feel it also to your comfort, if I am right in guessing from your countenance that you stand in need of consolation. I am very bold, a humble stranger to speak thus to you, young lady—but you have encouraged me by your kindness and condescension, and we are told never to neglect, to speak a word in season to the weary, and even when you hung over me in my fainting fit yesterday, I marked the contrast between your

sad pale face, and that of the bright young lady by your side."

Mary put her hand into the speaker's for a moment as if both in grateful acknowledgement of her sympathy, and as encouragement for her to proceed. There was something inexpressibly soothing to her wounded spirit in the simple earnestness of the poor woman's speech—strength and calm resolution to meet the darkened future, seemed to infuse itself into her own soul as she sat and listened.

At length in a low sad voice she responded:

"Thank you very much for speaking to me in that manner. I feel already that it has done me good, for you are indeed quite right in supposing that I am not quite happy, though my present unhappiness springs from a cause of which you, with all your troubles, have never, I think, experienced the bitterness. I have much on my mind just now, doubts and fears on a subject, on which I am unable to gain any clear enlightenment. You, who perhaps have received information from more authentic sources, may be able to tell me what you may have heard concerning Mr. Eugene Trevor."

Jane Marryott looked pained and embarrassed, and hesitated how to reply.

“Do not fear to speak out plainly,” faltered Mary, turning away her head; “anything is better than the uncertainty and vague insinuations with which I have been hitherto tortured.”

“Then, Miss Seaham,” Jane Marryott answered, sorrowfully, “if I speak plainly as you desire, I am forced to confess that all that I have heard of Mr. Eugene Trevor, makes me fear his being too like his father in disposition to make any lady happy.”

“Mr. Eugene Trevor cannot possibly be like his father,” murmured Mary, her woman’s faithfulness still rising up in her lover’s defence.

“God grant that it may not be so in every respect,” resumed the other. “But, alas! it is written ‘that the love of money is the root of all evil;’ and what but the coveting of his father’s riches, though it might be for a different purpose than the old gentleman’s avariciousness—I mean the spending it on his own selfish pleasures—could have made him act in many respects as I have heard that he has done; though God

forgive me for exposing the faults of a fellow-creature."

"Speak on, I entreat," Mary anxiously exclaimed.

"Well, Miss, I mean why did he not stand up, like his brother, for his injured, excellent mother; and if he did not exactly join hand in hand with those who oppressed her, why countenance her wrongs by their contented endurance? then about Mr. Eustace that true and noble-hearted gentleman?"

"Ah! what of him?" Mary eagerly inquired, lifting up her sadly-drooping eyes, and fixing them upon Jane Marryott's face with an earnest, fearful expression.

"He was treated shamefully by his father from a child," was the reply; "but I fear more badly still at last by his brother, if, indeed, it be true that he had any hand in the dark business, in which I am told he was mixed up."

"What business?" inquired Mary, turning very pale.

"It is almost too dreadful a story to repeat—almost to believe; but as I have mentioned the subject, and you, Madam, have made me to understand that you were not without un-

pleasant suspicions as to its truth, I will tell you what I was informed about the matter. The fact is, that an old servant at Montrevor, who had been much attached to Mrs. Trevor and Mr. Eustace, and who happened to be a native of the town in which I lived, came to the place, and finding me out, visited me for the purpose, I believe, of venting the bitterness of his soul against my unfortunate mother, who he spoke of as the cause of all the sorrow which happened to those he loved ; but when he saw me ashamed and grieved equally with himself, then he opened his heart more gently to me, and told me all about the present subject of his distress, and what had induced him to leave Montrevor, swearing never again to set his foot in it, as long as either Mr. Trevor, his son Eugene, or my mother, darkened its doors. He told me Mr. Eustace Trevor had been attacked by a brain fever, brought on by the shock of his mother's death, such as he had had once before after hard study, when Matthew had himself attended on his young master, who was delirious for some days and nights ; but that this last time, neither he, nor any of the servants, were allowed to go near his chamber ; and that at

last he had been carried away at night to a madhouse, it being reported through the house that he was out of his mind. Matthew went once or twice to the door of the establishment, to request to see his master, but was refused admittance. A week or two after, however, Mr. Eustace came back to Montrevor, and went to the library, where his father, brother, my mother, and a lawyer were assembled, making up papers to deprive him of his property. None of the servants saw him but Matthew, who was told to hold himself in readiness to assist his master, if any attempt was made upon his liberty. This, however, was not the case; he left the house as he came, in half an hour's time. Matthew followed him, and was sent back a few stages off, to bring his master's things away from Montrevor, chiefly for the sake of his mother's picture, which was amongst them. Then he gave Matthew some money, and finally but firmly commanded him to leave him. He said that he was going to quit the country, never to return; wished to retain no one, as that might lead to his discovery, entreating him, if he really loved him, to acquiesce in his wishes. He looked ill, and much reduced, of course, by

all that he had gone through, both in body and mind. His beautiful hair had been shorn, and with a smile that went through Matthew's heart like a dagger, he uncovered his wrists, and showed deep marks of manacles that they had put upon him indented there. But he said : ' Matthew, I was never mad ; it was only another attack, such as you, good old fellow, nursed me through some time ago ; but never mind, there are worse things than the charge of madness to suffer in this world. I am going to leave the country, and my unnatural enemies behind me ; and if you wish to serve me faithfully, as you hitherto have done, do not try to follow me or to find me out.' And then when Matthew continued to entreat, he grew firmer still, and told him if ever he found himself importuned by pursuit, either by friend or by foe, or the story of what had happened had got spread abroad, he should suspect him of being the cause. So Matthew was fain, with many tears, to bid him farewell ; and very soon after it was that Matthew came to me. But I have shocked and distressed you, dear young lady," Jane Marryott added, observing the look of

horror which deepened on Mary's countenance, as she with blanched cheeks and distended eyes listened to the recital. "I have never breathed all this to other mortal ear, and should not to you, had not your questioning drawn me to speak out what I fancied you to have already conjectured. Nay, they say that many of Mr. Eustace's friends were inclined to look suspiciously on the matter; but earthly friends, for the most part, are cold and lax in the behalf of those out of sight."

"And was nothing more heard by Matthew of his master?" Mary faintly inquired.

"Yes, early in spring, Matthew, to his joyful surprise, received a letter from Mr. Eustace, telling him to go to Oxford, and to remove some of the property he had at that place to London, where it was received by a strange clerical gentleman, and taken away he knew not whither. But it was a consolation to Matthew to know, at least, and be assured by the gentleman, that his master was safe and well, although still trusting to his obedience and his silence. I have never since heard or seen anything of Mr. Matthew, for he left to settle in London. I

have often thought upon the strange story, and wondered whether anything more had ever been heard of Mr. Eustace."

Jane Marryott ceased ; and for an instant Mary sat with clasped hands, and a stunned expression in her countenance, till at length meeting the gaze of her companion fixed upon her, with a look of regretful concern ; she held out her hand and with a wan smile, such as wherewith a patient might express his thanks at the performer of some painful but necessary operation, thanked her again for having satisfied her painful curiosity ; sweetly—yet with an expression which much belied the assertion—assuring Jane Marryott when she expressed her fears as to the effect upon her mind this communication had produced—that though pain of course such a relation could not fail to cause her—yet it was not more than she had endured of late, nor more for her to listen than some points of her communication must have been to her, Jane Marryott, to reveal ; for even in the absorption of her own feelings, Mary had not failed to mark and to compassionate the look of humbled shame and sorrow, which bowed down the daughter's head in those parts of her relation

bearing allusion to her mother, whilst at the same time the honest simplicity of her class and character, had forced her to pass through the ordeal without compromise or circumlocution; and thus from the lips of the stranger of yesterday, there had been revealed in a manner calculated to strike entire conviction upon the mind of the listener, every circumstance which before had been concealed by a dark cloud of mystery—or that the tender consideration of friends had dealt out to her, in the vile daily drop of vague insinuation and report.

Stupified and still, she sat for some time after Jane Marryott had taken her departure. Mary having said something at parting about seeing her on the morrow, as Jane Marryott did not leave for Liverpool, the place of her intended embarkation, till she had received the final tidings of her mother's fate; promised to her by Eugene Trevor.

But the interview did not take place. Mary sent her a useful present, but was too unwell to see her when she called.

CHAPTER XIV.

As they, who to their couch at night
Would win repose, first quench the light,
So must the hopes that keep this breast
Awake, be quenched, ere it can rest.

MOORE.

WE left Mary yielding herself to the passive impression made upon her mind by the startling results of that strange conversation; then gradually that mind began to rouse itself to think, and form, and deliberate as to what was to be done—or rather *was* there anything to be done? Was hers to be the tongue to blaze about the woman's story, to give substance and a shape to the airy-tongued aspersions brought against her lover's name—was this her woman's part? Oh, no; yet something she had to do—some part to act?

Under the influence of this impulse it was

that she arose, and going to a writing-table, sat down, and wrote to Eugene Trevor; not to accuse—not to condemn—not even to attack him in the mildest terms with the grave charge she had heard laid against him.

There was no such spirit as this in Mary; though the mere reminiscences of past words and looks which had escaped her lover in moments of uncontrol, but more still the words he had left unspoken—the looks so sedulously avoided, rose before her remembrance, and flashed fearful conviction on her mind; the more her soul shrunk from the dark idea now connected with her lover's history, the more did her heart bleed for him, who must all along have carried in his breast so heavy a load of conscience, upon whose life one fatal remembrance must have cast its bleak and dreary shade, whose smile must have hidden so aching a heart—whose laugh, which had so often rejoiced her soul, must have rung forth so false and hollow from his breast; and as love seemed startled from its seat, so did a great compassion usurp its place within her soul.

And he, the persecuted, the alien—how far less for him she felt were tears of pity due!

No, addressing Eugene in the subdued and broken terms which more touchingly spoke the feeling actuating her heart than any stern or solemn eloquence of appeal could have done, she began by alluding to the distressing interview of the preceding night; she gave him to understand her determination, that it should be final—that it had become the gradual conviction of her mind, that it was not fit that they should ever be united—before she had seen him, indeed, she had promised her brother that their inauspicious engagement should be brought to an end. Since then a terrible story had been sounded in her ear—one she had not courage to repeat—she would only say it related to his conduct to his brother, of whose identity with Mr. Temple she now was fully aware. Mary asked for no confession or denial of the imputation, but she told him simply where that brother was to be found, and implored him no longer, if innocent, to countenance such an implication, by consenting to continue his present false position in his father's house, under cover of so baseless a plea as that which had made his brother an exile. But if any shade of truth

rested on the story, why then what remained, but that full reparation which would bring peace and happiness to his own soul—greater peace and happiness, she was sure, if a single shade of guilt in this respect had laid upon it than he ever could have tasted since the dreadful moment when first it rested there? She was sure, though bitter words had been wrung from him in the excitement of last night's conversation, that he would feel convinced of the disinterestedness of the feelings which prompted her anxiety in this affair—that she would have pleaded for the interest of an utter stranger, as now she pleaded for the valued friend whom, whatever circumstances accrued, it was probable she should never see again. Mary alluded but slightly to the prospects of her own future, and that only to express how its altered aspect would be cheered and brightened by the knowledge that this just and necessary line of conduct had been adopted.

Mary had been interrupted in the middle of her letter by the return of Miss Elliott from the courts. Little dreaming the nature of the correspondence over which she found her sad friend

employed, there was enough revealed in her manner and countenance to bespeak the anxiety and painful absorption of her mind.

Even Miss Elliott's glowing description of the success, superior to that indeed of the preceding day which had attended her brother's exertions, in a case of considerable interest and importance (a report delivered not without many beautiful blushes on the fair speaker's part), even this scarcely seemed to have power to concentrate and excite her listener's languid and abstracted attention.

"Dear Miss Seaham, have you been sitting writing here all the time I have been away? if so, it is very naughty of you, for you do not look fit at all for the exertion. I am sure you must be more ill than you will allow us to suppose—and without your own maid too."

"I fainted last night, a thing I have not done since I was a child; of course to-day I feel rather weak and languid, in consequence," Mary replied, seeing it was necessary to account in a more satisfactory manner, for her wretched appearance.

"Fainted, my dear Mary, what could have been the cause?"

"I suppose the heat of the court, all the excitement and agitation of the day, had something to do with it," Mary answered hurriedly; "but pray do not tell Arthur, I would not have him annoyed with any anxiety on my behalf just now. I feel rather tired, having had a long visit from poor Jane Marryott and this letter too to write; when it is over," with a faint smile, "I trust you will find me a more agreeable companion."

Carrie Elliott took the gentle hint, and pressing her rosy lips on Mary's cheek, in her graceful caressing manner, went away to her own apartments.

"Oh, happy Arthur!" thought Mary as with tears starting to her eyes, she returned to her painful task. "Oh, why is it," asked the swelling heart, "that such different lots are appointed to human beings? why are some destined to be thus privileged and blest, whilst others are suffered, like myself, by a strong delusion, to place their hopes and happiness upon unworthy objects; to feed on ashes—to lean on reeds which pierce them, to be wounded—disappointed in their tenderest affections." What had there been in her blameless life to draw upon her such retribution? But these were but the murmuring

risings of the moment—in another, that spirit humble, contrite and resigned, which unquestioning kisses the rod of Him who hath appointed it, had resumed its customary place within the writer's breast.

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Eugene's letter concluded, Mary did not pause there. She felt there was one more step to be taken. She wrote to Mr. Wynne; she told him in a few emphatic words, how from a source bearing only too strong a stamp of veracity, doubts and suspicions which had long vaguely agitated her mind, had received perfect confirmation; namely, that Mr. Temple was no other than Eustace Trevor, the brother of Eugene. "But it is not this fact, dear Sir," she continued, "which most concerns and distresses me; it is the strange, and fearful story, which for the first time, in one terrible moment was revealed to me. I allude to the conduct of Eugene towards his brother. You, dear friend, I am convinced, are fully informed of every particular respecting Mr. Eustace Trevor's history. I implore you then to tell me, is there entire truth in this awful tale; and if so, to entreat your injured friend to allow no farther guilt to be

accumulated on the unhappy offender's soul. I have even ventured to write to Eugene, and entreated him to take the first step towards atonement and reconciliation ; but if my feeble influence fail, then help him to cast aside those morbid feelings and ideas (noble and generous in their origin as they were) which hitherto actuated his conduct, and to return to England—to the world—reassert his rights—the lawful place in his country and amongst his friends. Whether his unhappy brother comes forward in this cause or not, still let him act, as alas ! presumptuous as it may be for me to speak thus, to one so far above me, it had been well for all he had long since acted. What but woe could come when the righteous and the true fled before the face of wickedness and deceit—stooped to false disguises with a heart and conscience which could have defied the united malice of the world. Let him return ; all that is merciful I am fully convinced, as far as is consistent with human justice, will sway the conduct of one, so true and faithful a follower of that Divine Being, whose long-suffering forgiveness to the vilest offenders against His goodness, no man can fathom.”

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This letter proved of the two, the most agitating and trying to Mary's feelings; so that when her brother, just after its completion, entered the room, he found his sister's cheeks no longer pale as Miss Elliott had left them, but burning with a false and feverish excitement.

He questioned her affectionately about her health; for though she at first, with a forced vivacity, congratulated him fondly on the brilliant report she had heard of him from so eloquent a source, the brother had not failed in the meantime to observe her quivering lips, the glittering restlessness of her eyes, and the trembling hands with which she sealed the letter before her.

"Dear Arthur," she said, with a melancholy attempt at a smile, "I am as well as one in my position can be, for look," she added hurriedly, "I have done your bidding," and she took up one of the letters and placed it in Arthur's hand.

The brother started as he read the direction, then looked up anxiously into his sister's face.

"Mary, have you really done it?"

She bowed her head.

"And you are finally free of the engagement?"

"I am."

"And you do not repent of what you have done?"

"No."

"And you do not find it very painful?"

A wan smile was the answer.

"Dear Mary!" the brother exclaimed, turning away to hide a bright drop that started to his eye, "how shall we ever be able to repay you for all you have suffered so long and patiently?"

A smile again played upon her lips, as she marked the *we* for the first time used in a speech of this nature, and putting her hand in her brother's, she replied:

"By allowing me to witness your happiness, dear Arthur."

Too much occupied with unselfish concern for his sister, the young man did not understand the speech as it was intended; but after a moment's anxious consideration, inquired:

"Mary, has anything occurred since our conversation the day before yesterday, to hasten this step? I know that Trevor went away

early this morning, but had you any meeting with him yesterday?"

"I had," she answered, colouring deeply; "but, Arthur," in a faltering voice, "spare me any further questions; let what I have done suffice."

"Selfish—heartless—double-hearted," were the emphatic murmurings of the young man's lips, as he turned away with dark and moody brow, "would that *I* might ask a few questions of him."

"Arthur!" Mary exclaimed, laying her hands reproachfully on his shoulder, "you will make me believe that after all you are vexed and disturbed that our engagement is over."

"No, Mary, Heaven knows that is not the case; but still, it makes my blood boil to think how you have waited so long and faithfully, and that after all your trust and patience will have been all in vain, that your precious affection should have been wasted."

"Then, Arthur, console yourself with the assurance that I grudge no measure of faith and patience I may have exerted. Faith and patience can never be in vain; would that was all I have now to mourn over. As for wasted

affection—affection never can be wasted,” unconsciously quoting the words once sounded in her ear, in tones which ever since had lingered there. “My affection, though blind, perhaps, and mistaken, was pure and innocent. God will not suffer it to return fruitless to my bosom.”

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Arthur Seaham was obliged to go and prepare himself for the judge’s dinner, and Mary to exert herself during her *tête-à-tête* evening with Miss Elliott.

The next day she was too ill to rise. Her maid was sent for, and with her Mary a day or two after went to a pretty cottage not far distant, belonging to her brother, where he was soon to join her. The Morgans were not then in the country.

CHAPTER XV.

But now, alas! the place seems changed,
Thou art no longer here :
Part of the sunshine of the scene
With thee did disappear.

LONGFELLOW.

Confess ! Record myself
A villain !

VENICE PRESERVED.

MARY SEAHAM'S letter reached Montrevor the day after Mabel Marryott's funeral. Eugene Trevor tore it open eagerly, turned ashy pale as he perused it, then, thrusting it into his pocket, went about his business as before.

Day after day went by, and the letter remained unanswered—unacted upon.

With sullen defiance, or silent contempt, Eugene Trevor seemed to have determined upon treating the earnest appeal the important

requisition it contained. The appeal he endeavoured to consider it of a weak, simple woman, who probably looked upon an affair of so serious—nay, he was forced to acknowledge, so fearful—a nature in no stronger light than that of some romantic fiction, only costing the actor engaged in it the struggle of some heroic and high-wrought feeling to bring the matter to a satisfactory issue ; and who little knew that it would have been far easier to him to put a pistol to his head, than to draw down upon himself such ruin—in every sense of the word—as the sacrifice so calmly required of him by the fair and gentle Mary Seaham must entail.

“Senseless girl! what! recall my father’s incensed heir to his admiring friends, now all up in arms at the treatment—the persecution, they would call it—that he had received at my hands! restore him in all the strength and brightness of his intellect, striking conviction to every mind as to the truth of the testimonies, which would not fail to start up on every side, to substantiate the false nature of the plea which had alienated him from his lawful rights. Then how would vague reports

find confirmation! surmises, suspicions be brought to light! And what would become of *me*? what would become of my debts—my character—my honour—my covetousness?”

If these were in any sort the reflections which influenced Eugene Trevor for the next week or so after the receipt of Mary's letter, that letter seemed to have had at any rate the power of subduing for a time his energies and courage in the prosecution of former designs.

He made no attempt to alter his father's obstinate determination to keep wholly to his bed. He seemed suddenly to have lost his anxiety as to securing the will, and discovering the remaining forged notes. He was moody, gloomy, apathetic. One day chance took him to that part of the house where his mother's boudoir was situated. Pausing as he passed the door, he pushed it open, and entered.

The window was open—the sunbeams played upon the old quaint furniture, the room seemed fresh, and bright, and clear, in comparison with the rest of the house; which ever since Marryott's death and funeral seemed to have retained the influence, and impressed him with those revolting ideas attached to

the signs and ensigns of mortality entertained by the mind who cannot, or dare not, look beyond those consequences of corruptibility for the object of that fearful power. A dark, pall-like covering seemed spread over the whole house; a close, sickly atmosphere to pervade it throughout.

But here—all this seemed to have been effectually shut out, as if the destroying angel, as he brushed past with hasty wing, had seen the mark upon that door, which forbade him entrance; and Eugene Trevor went and stretched his head out of the window, breathing more freely than he had done for many a day.

Suddenly, however, he drew back; the action had brought to his remembrance just such another clear, bright sunny day, when he had last stood leaning in that position; but alas! how differently accompanied.

Then alone with a fair, pure, gentle girl—her sweet presence, her tender voice, infusing into his soul an influence which for the time had lifted him almost above himself into a paradise of thought—of feeling he had long since forfeited; and now alone—alone with his own dark jarring thoughts—alone with that juggling fiend

impenitent remorse gnashing at his heart—alone with his present disquiet—with the threatening fear of the future—the withering memories of the past. Well might he have cried aloud for the lost dream which suggested this comparison—a dream indeed false and treacherous in its foundation; for except that conscience slept undisturbed, how was he different then to what he is now. And yet he would fain have recalled it, for suddenly with that association seemed to have taken hold upon his fancy a passionate yearning, an impatient regret that he had not been able to secure possession of the being who had at that time certainly exercised a very worthy influence over his affections. A tormenting idea that his marriage at that period might have warded off the evils now circling threatening around his head; or at the worst have given him a fond and devoted sharer in his fortunes, such as in the whole world he knew not where to look for now. For how she had loved him! Yes, it was pleasant and soothing to his feelings, in their present ruffled state, to remember that he had been loved so tenderly, so purely, so entirely for himself alone: and then came the stinging reaction—the remembrance

that he was no longer loved—that he had seen a look of fear, almost of aversion, usurp the place of confiding affection in those soft and loving eyes: that finally, she had fainted from mere abhorrence at the idea of the promise he had pressed so urgently upon her—then too, when it seemed she had not heard the story which proved the cause and subject of her letter.

No—but she had been in Italy with his brother, that martyr-hero—fascinated, enthralled, no doubt,—and he must lose, relinquish her too. No, by heaven! that he would not do—that weak, pale, soft-hearted girl, should he passively resign his power over her also? villain or not as she might deem him, he must make her to believe it were cruelty, perjury, and sordid unfaithfulness, to desert him now—to break her vows, because she had discovered that there was one with better claims than himself to the fortune and expectations she had imagined him to possess.

* * * * *

In this new mood Eugene went to pay his customary morning visit to his father's room, and there fresh fuel was added to the fire lately kindled in his breast.

The old man had for the last few days taken a different turn. At first, as we have had said, his disenthralment from Marryott's guardianship had been a relief to his mind; but to this feeling had succeeded a restless disquiet as to the consequences of the removal of this Cerberus of his household, and the destruction both of himself and property, fraud, robbery, poisoning, fire, ruin and destruction in every possible shape, seemed to be hanging over his head by a single hair. He was in a perpetual fear whenever he found his son had left the house.

The day to which we allude, Eugene Trevor was assailed with the usual amount of murmuring and complaint.

"Eugene, a pretty state we are in now. I should like to know what's to become of us if we go on much longer in this manner."

"In what way, my dear Sir? everything seems to go on very quietly; really, with scarcely half a dozen servants in the house, and all the plate safe in the bank, I do not think there's any chance of much harm being done."

"No harm? Gracious powers! how do you know what abominations of extravagance are not going forward—you who are always sleeping

miles away from the wretches, and know not how I may be robbed, and cheated, and eaten out of house and home. I'll tell you one thing, Eugene, I am determined I'll get to the offices, if I'm carried there, and see to a fraction every bit of meat weighed that comes into the house, as *you* won't help me."

"My dear Sir, I would do everything in my power, I assure you, but the chief object at present I think will be to try and find some second Marryott, who, I hope," with a sneering emphasis on the words, "you will find an equal treasure of honesty and faithfulness as the other."

"I don't want another Marryott," whined the old man, peevishly; "I won't have a house-keeper at all, with their forty-guinea wages—they are as bad as any of them—Marryott understood my ways—"

"And your coffers too, Sir," added Eugene, with a scornful laugh. "A pretty hoard she had at the bank. I am sorry she made no will; I, as her foster-son, might have been the better for it; but as it is, it belongs to her husband, if he is yet alive."

"What's the use of telling me all this *now*,"

whimpered the father, "when you let her go on doing it without giving me a hint?"

"Oh, my dear Sir, she saved it for you in other ways! 'Set a thief to catch a thief,' you know, at any rate she let no one rob you but herself, which, as so very old and faithful a servant, of course she considered herself privileged to do; but set your mind at ease," he continued more soothingly, as the old man writhed upon his bed, groaning in agony of spirit, "I'll make it my business to find some honest, decent woman, who at least will not be able to claim the privilege of common property on the above-mentioned score."

"But how can you be sure of her being decent and honest?" still persisted Mr. Trevor; "there's not one amongst the race, I believe, that is so. I'll have nothing to do with any of them. I will tell you what, Eugene," and the old man's eyes gleamed at the sudden suggestion, "the only thing that's to be done—why don't you get a wife, and bring her to live here, and keep the house?"

Eugene Trevor's brow darkened.

"A bright idea, Sir," he responded, ironically.

"Yes, yes," continued the old man; "what

are you thinking of, Eugene, that you don't marry? you're getting on in life; I was married before I was as old by half. What's to become of the family and fortune—if there's any left of it—if you don't marry?"

His son's eye brightened.

"And by the bye, now I think of it," the father continued, craftily, "what became of that pretty young lady you brought here with Olivia, to that grand luncheon some time ago? I liked her—her voice was soft and gentle, and her manners sensible and quiet. She was something like your mother, Eugene, when I married her; now why could she not do for you?"

"You remember, Sir, that when I did propose making her my wife, it did not meet with your unqualified approbation," replied his son, evasively.

"Oh, didn't it! but that was long ago—then Marryott was here to look after things, and she, I suppose, didn't like it; but now couldn't you look her out again—she isn't gone, is she—you have not lost her?"

Eugene set his teeth hard together and did not immediately reply; but then he said, fixing

his eyes on the old man's face, and speaking in tones of affected carelessness :

" After all, I do not see how *my* marriage can be an affair of such *great* consequence, for you know, Sir, there is Eustace."

The old man's face convulsed terribly—that name had not for many years past been uttered by Eugene or any one in his presence.

" Eustace," he murmured tremblingly, " and what has it to do with Eustace—isn't he mad, or dead, or something ?"

" He is not dead, certainly, Sir ; and mad or not, he might be coming back any day, to put in claims which would not make my marriage so very desirable or expedient a business."

Mr. Trevor looked fearfully around him.

" But, Eugene," he gasped in a low, breathless whisper, " he's not near—he's not likely to come and threaten me. You must keep the doors fastened—you must keep him locked out."

" Oh, my dear father !" his son responded, " there's no such immediate danger as all that ; he's far enough off, and not likely to trouble you : only I mean, if—if anything were to happen—then—then, of course, he would be here to look after his own interests ; for he's on

the watch for your death, I have been told on good authority, and therefore of course you know it would not do for *me* to run any risk—to marry for instance—unless I can see my way a little more plainly before me.”

The old man became livid with rage; all his ancient hatred against his son seemed to revive at the suggestion thus insinuated against him.

“To watch for my death! and what then will that do for him—the bedlamite? Eugene! Eugene!” grasping his arm, “never fear him—go and get married—bring your wife here to look after the house, and I’ll live another half century to spite him, and then see who’ll have it all. We’ve got a will, Eugene, haven’t we?” chuckling and rubbing his hands exultingly.

“There was one made certainly, and a deed giving me the guardianship over the entailed estates in case of your death, under plea of Eustace’s incompetency. But if you remember, you would not have a duplicate made of it. I hope you have it safe.”

“I’ll look it out, Eugene,” Mr. Trevor continued as if effectually aroused by the new

friction his old heart had received. "I have it save enough. I'll get up immediately—no, not to-day, but to-morrow. I'll make a day of it, and put all things right."

"Very well, my dear Sir; keep yourself quiet for to-day. My man is here, you can trust in him should you want anything. I'm going to ride for an hour or two."

"Eh—to ride—where? I can't be left," the old man whispered.

"Oh, my dear Sir, William will take as good care of you as myself. I'm really expiring for want of fresh air, and exercise. I'm going to ride over to Silverton on a little business—to make inquiries you know about my wife," he added, looking back with a laugh as he left the room.

CHAPTER XVI.

Oh! it is darkness to lose love, however
We little prized the fond heart—fond no more!
The bird, dark-winged on earth, looks white in air!
Unrecognised are angels till they soar!
And few so rich they may not well beware
Of lightly losing the heart's golden ore!

WILLIS.

EUGENE TREVOR accordingly mounted his beautiful horse, all fierce and fiery for the want of exercise, and rode fast to Silverton without scarcely once slackening his steed's pace. Just as he approached the mansion, he raised his eyes to a chamber window above. Strange to say, he never drew near the house without being moved with a pang smiting at his heart, fraught with more or less of regretful recollections; for he could not but remember whose

gentle eyes had so often watched for him there.

But to-day, a darker and more determined spirit spoke in the upward "flash of that dilating eye," as his horse's hoofs clattered over the stony approach.

Mrs. de Burgh only, he heard to his satisfaction was at home, and she was confined to her dressing-room with a sprained ankle, but no doubt would see Mr. Trevor—a supposition in which the servant was quite correct.

Mrs. de Burgh was only too delighted to have the tediousness of her confinement thus broken in upon, particularly as she was hoping to hear all about Marryott's death, and the strange circumstances connected with the forged notes of which only vague and contradictory reports had reached her ear.

Having, therefore, first accounted for her accident, and giving vent to some complaining strictures on Louis's unfeeling conduct in leaving her alone; whilst he went visiting and amusing himself in Scotland, making it indeed appear an act very unconjugal and unkind, till it came out that Mr. de Burgh's departure had taken place before her accident; and that she had in

her fretful pique never written to inform her husband of what had occurred.

After this the fair lady began to question her cousin concerning the late events at Montrevor, and Eugene Trevor to satisfy her curiosity as far, and in the manner he deemed most expedient.

“So you see, Olivia,” he added, “altogether I have had a pretty time of it lately, what with one thing and another, and have been terribly put out.”

“Well, I thought there was something the matter, as you had quite deserted Silverton.”

“Plenty the matter; but there was one subject I came on purpose to speak to you about to-day; you were always my friend in need, Olivia, and I want to consult you—I mean about Mary Seaham.”

“Oh, indeed!” replied the lady, with a suppressed yawn, and a tone in which the words “that weary old subject” seemed expressed; for there is nothing which in the end so much wears out the sympathy and interest of one’s friends, however much excited they may have been in the beginning, as a protracted love affair.

"Oh, indeed! have you seen or heard anything of her lately?" Mrs. de Burgh then inquired with assumed interest.

"Yes, I saw her at —— after the trial, at which, you know, I had to appear. She was there with her brother, who was retained for the prisoner."

"Indeed, how did she look? is she much altered, poor girl?"

"I don't know," he answered gloomily; "she looked pale; but then, our interview was of no very pleasing nature, and But I have heard from her since then," he added, in the same tone, without concluding the former sentence; "she writes to break off the engagement."

"Well, Eugene, you can scarcely wonder; you must own, you have tried her patience to the very uttermost," his cousin answered, smiling reproachfully; "but it is just the way with you men," she continued, as she scanned more closely the working of Eugene's countenance, "you would keep us waiting till doomsday to serve your own convenience, without one scruple of concern; but if we begin to show any disposition to be off, then then you are, forsooth,

the injured and aggrieved ; well, however, is it not as well ? What profit or pleasure can such an engagement be to you, who year after year seem no nearer the end than at the beginning ? and as for your father, I believe he's ' the never-dying one.' ”

“ But, Olivia, matters have lately taken a different aspect,” her cousin muttered, gloomily, “ my father is urging me to marry, and would do anything to further it. I would marry her to-morrow, if it could only be managed.”

“ Well, why not tell her so I suppose it was only the apparent hopelessness of the case which induced her to give you up—tell her at once.”

“ I did tell her when I saw her last—more, I pressed an immediate marriage urgently upon her ; but,” with a bitter laugh, “ the idea has become so repugnant to her feelings, that she absolutely fainted with horror and aversion.”

“ Nonsense, Eugene, from joy most likely.”

“ Joy, indeed—and that letter she wrote after. Oh, no ! she has taken it into her head that I am a villain, and—”

Mrs. de Burgh laughed.

“ A villain,” she repeated, “ not quite so bad

as that I hope, though not very good I am afraid. A villain! no, we must manage to get that idea at least out of the young lady's head."

"But how?" Eugene asked.

"Why, really, I don't know; let me see—I will write to her—though letters are not worth much. I wish, indeed, I could get her here away from her relations, who are all such terribly good people."

Eugene Trevor drew his chair eagerly forward.

"What here, do you really mean it—do you think it possible—that there would be any chance of her consenting to come?"

"I do not see why it should be impossible—at any rate we can try, and I flatter myself I am not a little clever about these sort of things. Oh, depend upon it, poor girl, she will only be too glad to be persuaded into loving you again. But then, Eugene, I must be sure that you really are in earnest—that the affair will be really brought to a decided issue, before I move again in the business. I burnt my fingers too severely with it before, and brought upon myself quite sufficient odium. What does Mary say in her letter? I must be quite *au fait* in the business, you know, and understand what I am about."

"You shall know everything," said Eugene, approaching nearer, and subduing his tone to a confidential whisper. "It is a more complicated matter than you suppose. There is one very serious point to be dealt with : you will be surprised when you hear that it relates to my unlucky brother."

Mrs. de Burgh started, and looked a little uncomfortable.

"First of all," he added in still lower tones ; "but," pausing suddenly, "will you be so good as to tell that young gentleman not to stare me out of countenance," alluding to his cousin's eldest boy, a delicate and serious-looking child, who sat on his mother's sofa, his intelligent eyes with earnest scrutiny rivetted upon Eugene's countenance, as he sat there with bent brow, and dark look of brooding care.

"Don't be rude, Charlie ; go to the nursery," said his mother, half angry, half amused. "Why do you stare at cousin Eugene ? do you not think he is very handsome ?"

The boy coloured, but rising slowly, as if to escape an answer to the question, murmured evasively :

"Yes, I'll go up stairs, and look at my pic-

tures about the dark-looking Cain thinking about his brother Abel,”

“The strange child,” said Mrs. de Burgh, with a little awkward laugh, for she knew the picture to which the child alluded, and was irresistibly struck by the similitude which it seems had suggested the comparison. A dark flush at the same time suffused the temples of her companion ; but it had soon passed away. After a momentary pause, drawing near Mrs. de Burgh, and placing his chair a little behind her couch, with eyes bent still on the ground, Eugene resumed the subject thus interrupted. He spoke to her of his brother.

We will not detail the conversation, or how much, or in what manner he revealed or confided of that momentous theme. We must not compromise Mrs. de Burgh by supposing it possible she would have made herself privy to any known questionable transaction ; suffice it to say, that it was dusk before Eugene Trevor rose to leave her, and that then the cousins parted most amicably.

Eugene promised to ride over very soon again ; and when he had gone, Mrs. de Burgh after lying still meditating for a short time, aroused herself with the philosophical observa-

tion that this was a strange world—rang the bell for lights, which being brought, and her writing materials laid before her, she wrote as follows :

“ My dearest Mary,

“ Eugene Trevor has just been here, wretched beyond description, to tell me you have broken off your engagement with him just as matters were beginning to take a favourable turn, and he could marry you to-morrow. I tell him he deserves this for having taxed your patience so long ; but that, as you may imagine, gives him little comfort. But, Mary dear, I cannot believe you so very hard-hearted as to place so final an extinguisher on his hopes.

“ He tells me you have listened to reports about him ; one scandalous story in particular he mentioned, about his strange and unfortunate brother, in behalf of whom, some romantic adventures in Wales and abroad, gave you an interest unduly awarded. I say unduly—because, however fine and noble a creature Eustace Trevor may be by nature, it is not right that you should be unfaithful and unjust to Eugene through his cause. However, this is an affair which we cannot rightly dis-

pose of in a letter ; in one conversation I could put everything before you, dear, as clear as day.

“ My dear Mary, come to Silverton ; you owe it to Eugene—you owe it to yourself—you owe it to me, who first made you known to my cousin, not to refuse this request. I do not know where to direct this letter, I only know that you are somewhere in Wales, so send it to Plas Glyn, from whence it is certain to be forwarded to you. When I also tell you I am confined to my sofa by a terrible sprain which will keep me a prisoner, Heaven knows how long, you will suspect perhaps a little selfish feeling is mixed up with my solicitude for your visit ; but no, indeed, I am too seriously anxious for your own happiness and Eugene’s to have any such minor considerations, though a pleasure only too great would it be to me to have my dear Mary with me again.

“ Louis will be at home by the time you arrive. I need not say how glad he will be to see you. Eugene shall not come here at all, if you do not like it—he need not even know of your arrival ; he seldom comes to Silverton now. Alas, poor fellow ! the recollections this

place awakens can be but painful to him under present circumstances.

“ Mary, Eugene may have some faults, but still I maintain that you might have made him what you wished, and that love so tried as his ought not to be thrown away, as you are about to do. Not many men, after being exposed to the temptations to which Eugene has been subjected, would still, after four years’ almost constant separation, be so very urgent in the cause of marriage. But, dear Mary, even setting aside all this, what have you better to do than to come here with your faithful servant? You surely do not mean quite to desert Silverton and your cousins. I want you to see my children; the youngest is such a fine creature. I shall look forward to your answer with the greatest anxiety; you do not know how much may depend on acceding to the request of

“ Your affectionate

“ OLIVIA.”

And this was the letter Mary at last received, after having, day after day, waited in sick and solitary suspense for any answer which she might have received from Eugene Trevor—

solitary, for though her brother, as speedily as his professional engagements would permit, had followed her, a summons from Judge Elliott had quickly succeeded, offering the young man some very responsible legal appointment, which required his immediate presence in London. Of course there could be no question of demur. Mary urged her brother's immediate departure, over-ruling any scruples on his part at leaving her alone, and his earnest desire that at least she should accompany him to town.

No, she persuaded him that she should rather like the rest and quiet of the place in her present state of feeling; "besides, dear Arthur," she said with a melancholy smile, "it is necessary that I should begin to learn to accustom myself to a solitary life."

"I do not at all see that, Mary," Arthur answered almost angrily—"why your's should ever be solitary."

"No indeed," was the affectionate reply; "I know that can never be, with such a brother, and," with a playful smile, "such a sister as I hope soon to have."

"Mary, you have become very anxious to dispose of your brother."

"Yes, certainly I am, to such advantage;" then with gaiety which shot a ray of gladsome pleasure from the young man's bright eyes, she added: "besides, I am as much in love with Carrie as yourself; and she and I are sure to get on well together."

So Mary was left alone, supposed at least to be calmly happy, when alas, poor girl! to such a desirable condition she was as yet very far from having arrived. No, there was as yet too much of suspense and uncertainty still gnawing within her soul.

It is not all at once, without a struggle, and one backward longing look, that we can resign ourselves to the certainty that the hope and trust on which we had flung our all, has proved a lie. There were two letters yet to come ere she could let the black curtain fall over the past for ever.

Alone too, with a dreamy impression stealing over her, that whatever her brother's affection might maintain, this loneliness was a foretaste of her future life. And then the bitter sigh and yearning void, as the thought flew back to visions all too brightly wrought, now for ever flown.

Her faithful servant, who marked her dear young lady's spirits sink lower and lower every day, sighed too over her disappointed expectations, for she thought "it would have been better for Miss Mary to have married Mr. Trevor—even if he were somewhat of a wild gentleman, as they said he was: she is so like an angel that she could tame a lion. So good and tender a heart as hers, was never made to live alone with no one to love her, and to love—and my heart misgives me," added the affectionate servant. "She will never get over the affair. And Mr. Arthur too, he is getting too great a man to have much time to give to her—and there's his heart too, quite gone they say after Miss Elliott, who is as much taken with him I fancy; and after all he is but a brother, and the best of them are not so sure and comfortable like as a husband. But after all," the good woman continued to soliloquize, "a bad character will not certainly do for my young lady, and there's something wrong in the Trevors they say. Who would have thought it, and my Miss Mary loving Mr. Eugene as she did; but she is so good and innocent-hearted herself! At any rate, she

must not stay moping here much longer. I can see she's getting quite low and nervous."

These were good Mrs. Hughes' thoughts and reflections on the subject, and it was no inconsiderable satisfaction to her mind, when Mary came to her one morning with a letter in her hand, informing her, that she had received an invitation from Silverton, which she intended to accept, and begged her to prepare without delay for the journey; after which Mary sat down and wrote to Mrs. de Burgh, and also the following announcement to her brother:

"Dearest Arthur,

"You will be surprised—perhaps not well pleased—to hear that I am going to set off tomorrow for Silverton. I have had a pressing letter from Olivia de Burgh; and there are many things that I must have explained by Louis and herself, before I feel that I can with a mind contented and at ease settle down (I do not speak ironically, but with the calm assurance that there will be much of blessedness in store for me) in that estate—a life of single blessedness—which now lies before me.

"Do not then suspect me of weak and

wavering motives in the step I am going to take. Believe me when I say, that it is not my intention even to see Eugene. Olivia has promised that I should not meet him unless I desire it; and what could our meeting cause, but pain and discomfort to us both? No, I can no longer fight against the conviction which time and my more experienced perception has forced upon me, that Eugene Trevor is not what my blind affection so long firmly believed him.

“God knows my love was not of an evanescent nature; and irresistible indeed must be the causes which have so undermined it. But still my heart shrinks from doing an act of injustice, by condemning him more than he deserves; and there is one horrible suspicion with which my mind has been distracted, my heart can never rest till it has been more clearly enlightened.

“Oh, Arthur! it is a dark and terrible story, I cannot enter upon it now. Suffice it that, if true, it must cast a shadow on my latest hour of existence. If you knew how it has—how it still preys upon my imagination, even till I sometimes fear the bewildering influence it may produce upon my senses, you would not now blame the impulse which leads me to prefer

even the risk of obtaining this fearful certainty—rather than continue groping in darkness—for to such I may compare the condition under which I have for some time laboured. But Olivia has promised that my mind shall be relieved, and Louis, I know, will tell me the truth. May God give me strength and fortitude to bear it.

“I shall not wish to remain at Silverton longer than is absolutely necessary; if therefore your business will permit you to join me there, I can travel with you back into Wales where the Morgans will by that time have returned, and I can stay with them as they wish, till our plans and prospects, dear Arthur, are more finally arranged.”

CHAPTER XVII.

Thou, my once loved, valued friend !
 By Heavens thou liest ; the man so called my friend
 Was generous, honest, faithful, just, and valiant :
 Noble in mind, and in his person lovely ;
 Dear to my eyes, and tender to my heart ;
 But thou, a wretched, base, false, worthless coward.
 * * * * *
 All eyes must shun thee, and all hearts detest thee,
 Pr'thee avoid, no longer cling thou round me,
 Like something baneful, that my nature's chilled at.

VENICE PRESERVED.

It was as may be supposed, a trying ordeal for poor Mary, her arrival at Silverton. The circumstances attendant on her last arrival, then hopeful, trustful, happy ; for what appeared the light fears and imaginary evils which then oppressed her, contrasted with her feelings and circumstances now ? The thousand recollections the sight of the place recalled, everything,

caused her heart to sink and sicken within her.

With trembling limbs she alighted from the carriage, and in answer to her inquiries for Mrs. de Burgh, was ushered by the servant into the drawing-room.

A gentleman stood leaning his elbow against the marble mantle-piece. The door closed upon her, and she found herself alone with Eugene Trevor. Surprise, distress, displeasure, were alternately displayed on Mary's countenance; and withdrawing the hand which, having hurried forward to meet her, he had seized passionately in his own, she faltered forth in accents choked by indignant emotion:

"I did not expect this; Olivia promised—or I should never have come."

"It was not Olivia's fault, the blame is entirely mine, Mary. But, . . . is it really come to this? can you look around; can you remember all that passed between us in this room; nay, what happened on this very spot—here where our vows of love were plighted?"

"I do remember," she replied in accents low and mournful, and leaning in trembling

agitation against the very chair on which on that occasion she had been seated.

"Then surely your heart cannot harden itself against me—cannot doom me to misery."

"My letter," Mary faintly murmured, gently but firmly repulsing the effort he made again to take her hand.

"Oh! that abominable story, cooked up against me, which you are so ready to believe—Olivia will explain"

"God grant it!" she murmured, turning her eyes lighted with a brightened expression on his face; but oh! for one calm, clear, truthful glance in return.

Again painfully she averted her head, and saying faintly:

"I will go to Olivia," moved slowly towards the door. Eugene did not attempt to stay her departure, only darkly eyeing her retreating footsteps, he suffered her to leave the room without stirring from the spot whereon he stood.

Slowly and heavily she ascended the familiar staircase to Mrs. de Burgh's dressing-room. Her cousin, still lying on the sofa, started with affected surprise at her appearance, and stretched out her arms to receive her.

Pale, cold, and silent Mary suffered the embrace, then sinking on a seat, covered her face with her hands, sobbing forth :

“Olivia, this was cruel ; this was unkind—untrue ; I came here trusting to your word. Where is Louis ? he surely would not think this right, would not have allowed me to be drawn into such a distressing position.”

“My darling Mary, what do you mean ? You have not fallen in with Eugene, I hope ? Well, that is too bad of him ; and he promised so faithfully that he would leave an hour ago. One of the children let out that you were coming, and you know there is no managing lovers in a case like this ; the poor fellow is half mad with wretchedness on your account. However, go he shall, dear, if you wish it—pray make yourself easy on that point. You must have some tea ; you are exhausted after your journey ; and then we shall be able to talk comfortably together. No one shall interrupt us. Louis has not come home yet, but I expect him every moment ; he will be so charmed to see you.”

Thus Mrs. de Burgh hurried on with affectionate alacrity, without giving Mary time to renew her reproaches or complaints, but by the

tears which from her overcharged heart the poor girl still silently continued to shed.

Mrs. de Burgh did not mind those tears ; she rather considered them a favourable sign. Had Mary appeared before her after the meeting into which she well knew she had been surprised—cold, calm, stern, silently upbraiding, she would have feared then for the success of the cause in which she was engaged.

But judging from herself, tears in her sex's eyes were marks of conscious weakness, and the melting mood of feeling rather than of any firmness or serious effect upon the mind ; therefore with secret complacency she watched and awaited the close of her gentle cousin's agitated paroxysm of emotion. Then she had strong tea brought, of which she insisted upon her drinking, overwhelming Mary with care and tenderness, in the meantime sending for the children to stay a few moments to divert her thoughts, and restore her by their innocent presence to a more natural state of thought and feeling. Then, after partaking herself of some dinner, which Mary declined to share, she saw her guest ensconced in a comfortable arm-chair by the fire, looking very pale, it was true, and eyes

bright only from nervous excitement, but her feelings apparently tranquillised and soothed ; then struck bravely forth upon the anxious theme.

With tact, skill, and eloquence which would have graced a better cause, Mrs. de Burgh pleaded in her favourite's behalf — favouritism, alas ! we fear drawing its source from principles doing little honour to the object of her partiality, and justifying still less the restless zeal with which she strove to forward a cause, in which the fate of a good and innocent being was so closely implicated.

But though "her tongue dropped manna and could make the worst appear the better reason," the time was past when the willing ear of the auditor could be thus beguiled. She had no longer to deal with the too credulous and easy-to-be-persuaded Mary of other days, but one with eyes too tremblingly awake, and ears too powerfully quickened, to the discernment of falsity from the truth.

Each specious statement rang false and hollow on her unpersuaded mind, touching not one atom of that weight of inward conviction which, alas ! had been too firmly rooted there, for aught but the touch of genuine truth to

undermine; and when, with her face buried in her hands, she listened with suspended respiration to the story of the brother's madness, which flowed so glibly from those eager, fluent lips, little Mrs. de Burgh deemed now every word thus uttered served but more forcibly to confirm the fearful impression which the simple-minded Jane had made upon her listener's mind.

"And then poor man," Mrs. de Burgh, continued, "after frightening the old man out of his wits by his violence, he fled from the house and hid himself no one knew where. Poor Eugene's anxiety on his behalf was extreme; but of course, as he supposed him to have gone abroad, all researches were taken on the wrong track. There is no one to vouch for the condition of his mind during that interval—when he came to your part of the world it seems that he had pretty well recovered."

Thus had Mrs. de Burgh concluded her plausible relation, pausing not a little, anxious for the effect produced upon her ominously silent auditor. Mary then lifted up her eyes, and with an expression upon her face, the fair

Olivia did not know exactly how to understand, replied :

“ Yes, he came to us, appearing like some being of a higher sphere, and in accordance with Mr. Wynne’s earnest persuasion (Mr. Wynne, a man whose keen and sensitive discernment it would have been difficult to deceive) settled down amongst us at once—unmistakably endued with every attribute which bespeaks the spirit of wisdom and a sound mind. He had spent the winter at ——, and often spoke of the solitary life he led whilst at that wild spot. Since that time we have frequently visited the Lake ; and very far seemed the idea of madness to have entered the minds of the poor simple people of the place, in connection with that ‘ great and noble gentleman,’ as they called him, who, to their pride and profit, had taken up his abode amongst them for a time. Then he went to ——, and there he was taken very ill at the inn. The landlady and the doctor, who are both familiar to us, never had but one simple idea respecting the nature of his malady. He came to us with the signs of past suffering stamped too plainly on his countenance—suffering which,

in such a man, appeared but to exalt and sanctify the sufferer in the eyes of those who beheld him.

“ But all this would bear little on the point, were it not for the surer testimony which not myself only, but the many who for five years lived in daily witness of the calm excellency of his life and conduct—the undoubted strength and clearness of his mind and understanding are able to produce. Tell the poorest and most ignorant of the little flock, amongst whom Mr. Eustace Trevor (their beloved Mr. Temple) so familiarly endeared himself, that he—who even, though interchange of language was scarcely permitted between them, they had learned to venerate as some almost supernatural being—that *his* mind had been ever overthrown by an infirmity which had banished him from society, from his friends; and they would laugh to scorn the imputation, and say ‘that the world rather must be mad, that imagined such an absurdity against him.’ ”

Slowly and plainly, as if each word was drawn from her by the irresistible conviction of her secret soul, to which some inward power compelled her to give utterance, Mary offered these assertions. Mrs. de Burgh’s countenance

when she concluded showed signs of uneasiness, but she only said with some bitterness of tone :

“ Those people must indeed be rather uninformed, who are not aware that it is more frequently the strongest and the wisest minds who are most liable to that most deceptive of all maladies ; but really, my dear Mary,” she continued with increased asperity, “ it seems to me a great pity that you did not sooner appreciate the extraordinary perfections of which you speak with such enthusiasm—both you and poor Eugene might then have been spared all the trouble your mutual attachment has thus unfortunately occasioned—though, of course, this is only according to your own view of the case, for it would enter into few people’s heads to believe it probable that poor Eustace Trevor could ever marry.”

The blood flowed with painful intensity over Mary’s face and brow, and a spark of almost fire shot from her usually mild eyes. But from whatever cause the strong emotion proceeded, whether impatient indignation at such unjust and cruel persistence on her cousin’s part, or any other feeling, its unwonted force, though momentary, seemed entirely to over-

power her self-possession, for though her lips moved, she found no words to reply, but drooped her head in silent confusion before her cousin.

So Mrs. de Burgh continued :

“ You, Mary, would have been the last I thought to put such a construction on an affair of this sort. You cannot know the circumstances of the case, and the difficult position in which Eugene might have been placed. That a most violent hatred between him and his father always existed is well known. That Eustace Trevor’s feelings in this respect (feelings which it is to be confessed were not without some foundation) after his mother’s death amounted to frenzy, as it is easy with his excitable disposition to believe. His violence must indeed have been extreme, for I know from good authority, that it has been impossible ever since to mention his eldest son’s name in Uncle Trevor’s presence, without sending the old man almost into convulsions. For peace and grief’s sake alone, Eugene might have found it necessary to have his brother removed from the house, especially when sanctioned, as of course the action must have been, by medical certificates ; at any rate, it is only

charitable to suppose error—rather than malice deliberate and propense—to have been the origin of the proceeding.”

Mary’s eyes were by this time lifted up in anxious attention.

“Yes, yes,” she murmured, with clasped hands and agitated fervour; “convince me it were *error*, and I should be thankful—oh, how thankful to cherish the idea; but vain, vain will be the endeavour to reason me into the persuasion that anything short of the most generous misconception could have justified any such proceeding with regard to Eustace Trevor, as the cruel course which was pursued against him; and oh, Olivia, I wonder at you—a woman—advocating such a cause.”

Then pressing her hand wearily across her brow, as if she felt the overpowering influence of the dark bewildering theme which had taken such painful hold of her imagination.

Mrs. de Burgh lay back upon her sofa, and was silent. She felt herself getting into deeper waters than she had power or ability to struggle with. She had been persuaded to use all her rhetoric, into arguing a serious but gentle-minded girl into marrying a man, towards

whom time and experience had much shaken her estimation.

To sift so particularly a matter, the wrongs and rights of which she had, like the world in general, been contented to take for so many years on credit, she was not prepared; and Mary's rebuke chafed her spirit, and changed in a manner the current of her thoughts.

"How very disagreeable it would be for Eugene, if his brother should ever come forward, claiming rights, of which he had been dispossessed by his brother, under false pretences—" and the fair lady was beginning, for the first time, seriously to agitate her mind with these reflections, when the door softly opened, and Eugene Trevor himself made his appearance.

One uneasy glance directed towards Mary, as if to see how she would take the intrusion; a slight movement of her shoulders, as she met the look of anxious inquiry which Eugene Trevor fixed upon her, seeming to express: "I have done my best—you must now try for yourself—" and Mrs. de Burgh took up her work and applied herself to it assiduously. Eugene Trevor said something not very coherent about his horse not being ready

and seated himself a little behind Mary's chair, who had seemed more by feeling than by sight to be aware of her lover's entrance; for she had not lifted up her downcast eyes, fixed so drearily on the fire. And now only a scarce perceptible shudder and more rigid immovability seemed to announce the knowledge of his proximity.

"Mary is very tired," observed Mrs. de Burgh, glancing up from her work.

Eugene bent gently forward, and looked with earnest solicitude into Mary's face. He did not speak, but volumes could not have expressed more than the silent concentrated fervour of those dark, passionate eyes.

It was impossible not to feel in some degree their power, though the influence which had enthralled her soul in other days, was gone; or remained, to use that most hackneyed of all similes, only as the power of the repellant rattlesnake.

Painfully she turned away her head, whilst the hand of which Eugene gently had managed to possess himself, struggled to free itself from his hold. Probably, Mrs. de Burgh conceived, from all appearance, that this was the mo-

mentous crisis which it was her duty to make another effort to assist.

She had a little piano-forte in her dressing-room, removed there to while away the hours of her confinement to its precincts; and she contrived, without disturbing her companions, to wheel her light sofa in the right direction. She then arranged herself in a moment before the instrument, and saying, playfully, "Mary, my dear, you shall have some of your favourite songs to cheer you up a little," she struck the chords, and without waiting for further encouragement or reply, began to sing—perhaps by accident, but more probably by design—her choice falling upon those plaintive songs and ballads with which she delighted Mary that first evening, more than four years ago, of her last visit to Silverton. That night on which her fair hostess was always pleased to consider the magic of her own sweet singing had in no slight degree contributed to weave the fatal spell, whose broken charm it was now so much her object to renew. What better could she do for Eugene's interest, than try this method of enchantment once again?

And could Mary listen, and her susceptible

soul not be touched by the memories and associations which must be naturally awakened? Could she sit by Eugene's side, and not be carried back in softened fancy to the time—that time to use the impassioned language of the poet—

“ When full of blissful sighs
They sat and gazed into each other's eyes,
Silent and happy, as if God had given
Nought else worth looking on this side of heaven.”

Alas! for the spell so irremediably broken, that not even this sweet and subtlest of all human influences can restore.

Mary's soul was stirred indeed within her, but it was with very different emotions than those which were intended to be produced; above all was her heart swelling within her, with wounded, more than indignant feelings, against the pretended friend who had thus made her the unsuspected victim of an unworthy plot.

Therefore the soft music rather seemed to irritate, than to soothe her jarred and shaken nerves—the words of thrilling pathos, which the strain for the most part conveyed, to sound in mocking accents on her ear.

"The sunshine of my life is in those eyes,
And when thou leav'st me, all is dark within."

What to her could such words be, but mockery; when now, alone "the image of a wicked, heinous fault lived in the eye," which once, indeed, had seemed too powerfully to absorb the whole sunshine of her life.

But still she sat there, pale, spiritless, and subdued, as if some spell still bound her, she had not energy to break, however unwillingly she yielded herself to its sway. Sat—till from silent looks, it seemed that Eugene, perhaps encouraged by her passive conduct, began again to urge in low and pleading tones his anxious suit, his father's earnest wishes on the subject—his own broken-hearted despair. Then, it seems, her passive trance had given way, for very soon after, when Mrs. de Burgh, warned by the sound of Eugene's voice, that matters were taking a more decisive and particular character, had begun to strike the chords with considerably proportioned force, she was startled by hearing Mary's low voice close behind her, announcing, in accents tremulous with agitation, her intention of immediately retiring to bed.

The sweet sounds were abruptly suspended ; the performer looking up, said, with cheerful *insouciance* which she did not exactly feel, for she was rather disappointed at this ominous sign of the destruction of her hopes that affairs were taking a more favourable turn :

“ Yes, dear Mary, certainly, you shall go directly. I forgot that you had had so fatiguing a journey.”

Then glanced uneasily round to see how it went with the other party concerned.

Eugene Trevor had approached the window, and having, with impetuous hand, drawn aside the curtain, threw open the shutter, and looked out, as if to ascertain the aspect of the night.

“ By Jove, dark as pitch,” he murmured moodily ; then looking back, cried with a kind of reckless laugh, “ Olivia you must keep me here to-night, I think, if you have the least regard for my neck.”

Mrs. de Burgh glanced towards the window.

“ Is it so very dark ?” she asked, evasively.

“ Dark—not a star to be seen—but—what in the name of fortune, is that strange sudden light yonder ?”

Mrs. de Burgh again glanced towards the window, but from the position of her seat could not gain sight of anything but the thick impenetrable darkness. Mary, however, standing with the candle she had taken up in her trembling hand, mechanically turned her eyes in the direction indicated. They were, indeed, immediately attracted by a red glare, which, rendered more conspicuous by the surrounding blackness, illuminated the distant sky opposite, just across the twelve miles of flat country separating Silverton from that wooded rise, which had so often rivetted her interested gaze, as marking the neighbouring site of Montrevor.

But it must have been a meteorical appearance which had produced the transitory effect, for even as she gazed it seemed to have faded from her sight—or rather, she observed it no more—saw nothing but the dark eye of Eugene Trevor flashing upon her with a lurid glaze, which in the troubled confusion of her ideas seemed in some way confounded with this late aspect of the sky.

“Sullenly fierce, a mixture dire,
Like thunder clouds, half gloom, half fire.”

She turned away, lighting her candle with unsteady hand.

"Good night, Olivia," she said gravely.

Mrs. de Burgh held out her hand.

"Good night, Mary. I hope you will sleep well, and be better to-morrow."

By a faint, cold smile, Mary alone acknowledged the kindness of the desire. She was turning silently away, but something seemed to come over her spirit—a chill—a pang—a sinking at the heart—such as those must feel who, be the circumstances what they may, have torn thus away the last link of that broken chain which once, alas! so fondly bound them.

She paused, her softened glance directed towards Eugene. There was no relenting, no wavering in the glance, nothing but a mournful interest, sorrowful regret, offered up as it were, as a final tribute to the past.

But it seemed not that Trevor was in a condition of mind to enter into the spirit of this silent adieu. Throwing himself back upon a chair, without appearing to notice it, and addressing himself to Mrs. de Burgh, he exclaimed in a tone of almost insolent defiance:

"Olivia, I must trouble you to order me a bed also. I shall not turn out this dark night for any one."

It was not so much the words, but the tone in which they were spoken, which seemed to complete the work of disenchantment. The softness passed from Mary's eyes, and her parting look, though still sorrowful, was grave and firm, whilst in a voice, low, but full of dignified reserve, she uttered the words "Good bye."

Simple as was their emphasis, they were not to be mistaken. They seemed to say "Good bye, Eugene, for whether you stay to-night, or go, you and I meet not again." And then she slowly left the room.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Suddenly rose from the South a light, as in autumn the
 blood red
 Moon climbs the crystal walls of Heaven, and o'er the
 horizon,
 Titan-like, stretches its hundred hands upon mountains
 and meadow,
 Seizing the rocks and the rivers, and piling huge sha-
 dows together.

LONGFELLOW.

Why flames the far summit ? why shoot to the blast,
 Those embers, like stars from the firmament cast ?
 'Tis the fire-shower of ruin, all dreadfully driven
 From his eyrie, that beacons the darkness of Heaven.
 Oh crested Lochrel ! the peerless in might,

* * * *

Heaven's fire is around thee, to blast and to burn ;
 Return to thy dwelling, all lonely, return,
 For the blackness of ashes shall mark where it stood.

CAMPBELL.

It was with a numbed and dreary sense of
 bruised and outraged feeling that Mary—the last

fibre of mistaken partiality torn from her heart—the last atom of her false idol crumbled into dust, lay down upon her bed that night.

She had lain there perhaps an hour, when the loud ringing of the hall-door aroused her from the state of dreamy stupor which was stealing over her.

Her first supposition was that her cousin Louis had returned. Then the hasty-ascending footstep of the servant, the quick knocking at the door of Mrs. de Burgh's dressing-room, from which the chamber appointed for Mary was not far removed; the hasty communication then given, the loud and agitated voice of Eugene in reply, his impetuous rush down stairs and from the house—as the banging of the hall-door made her aware—led her rather to conclude that some intelligence of peculiar importance, perhaps relating to the illness of old Mr. Trevor, had been received from Montrevor.

The next moment Mrs. de Burgh's bell rang violently, and very soon after her maid entered Mary's apartment, begging Miss Seaham to go immediately to Mrs. de Burgh.

* * * *

Montrevor was on fire! Mr. Eugene Trevor

had been sent for. Mrs. de Burgh was greatly agitated.

Pale and horror-stricken, Mary hastened to obey the summons. She found her cousin with her sofa pushed towards the window, gazing in strong excitement on the red glare, now again plainly visible in the distance, and so fearfully accounted for.

“Gracious heavens, Mary, is not this terrible! the poor old place. Eugene has gone off distracted, not knowing whether he will find the whole house consumed; as for the wretched old man, God only knows what has become of him! it did not seem that the messenger brought any sure tidings of his safety. How dreadful if he were to perish in the flames!”

“Dreadful, indeed!” murmured Mary; but she was no match for her cousin’s volubility. She sank down shivering by her side, her eyes fixed in appalled bewilderment on the awful sign written in the heavens—sign, as it were, of the judgment and fiery indignation which is to devour the adversary.

They sat there long intent upon the anxious watch, though little was to be gleaned from that flickering and unconstant glare, now deepening,

now dying into comparative darkness, but that the fire was still in existence.

Mrs. de Burgh had ordered some of her servants to follow Eugene, and render any assistance in their power; one was to return immediately with intelligence. In the meantime she entreated Mary not to leave her, a petition which poor Mary, in her present state of mind, was not inclined to resist.

Coffee was brought up to revive their strength and spirits, during the two hours which at least must elapse before the messenger could arrive, and wrapping Mary in a warm shawl, the weary interval of suspense passed away as quickly as could be expected. It was over at last. The servant returned. Mrs. de Burgh had him up to the dressing-room to hear the account from his own lips.

In a few words the man related, that one entire wing of the house had been past recovery when the party arrived from Silverton, or before any effectual assistance could be procured. It was the wing containing the private library of Mr. Trevor; there it was supposed the fire had broken out and made some way before discovered by the household.

The catastrophe was supposed to have originated in some way from Mr. Trevor, as he was missing in his own apartment; and it was feared that he had perished in the flames, as he had been known to have some nights before crept stealthily from his bed-room to the study. It did not appear that any of the servants had been sufficiently courageous to attempt his rescue, and of course now all hope of saving the unfortunate old man was at an end, the flames having communicated with the adjoining passages before the alarm was given, though even then Mr. Eugene Trevor had seemed almost inclined to pierce the flames in that direction, so great was his horror at the intelligence.

Mrs. de Burgh at this awful communication fell into a fit of hysterical weeping, whilst Mary, pale as death, speechless, tearless with emotion, sat with her eyes raised and her hands clasped together. "Thoughts too deep for tears" stirred up within her breast—thoughts of death, judgment, and eternity.

How terrible indeed the retribution which had fallen upon the head of that sinful old man. How mighty and terrible the hand which might be said to have taken up the cause

of the oppressed, and stopped the way of the ungodly !

* * * *

Fearfully vivid was the light which guided Eugene Trevor on his course, as like a demon of the night he dashed through the darkness—his neighing, foaming steed bearing him far onward before the party following him from Silverton.

The conflagration lighted the country many miles around, and fierce was the effort the distracted rider had to make to force the frightened animal to proceed.

When entering the grounds, the flames shone through the leafless trees full upon his path, his dilated nostrils inhaled at every breath air heated like a furnace ; and bleeding, panting, trembling in every limb, stopped short before the blazing pile.

A shout from the spectators, now congregated in considerable numbers, announced the anxiously expected arrival of Eugene Trevor. One second's pause, as raising himself in his stirrups, he seemed in one wild, hurried, desperate glance to review the fearful scene—then casting away the reins and springing to the ground, called

out in a hoarse loud voice an inquiry for his father ; but without waiting an answer—or perhaps reading the full truth too plainly revealed on the countenances of those around him—he darted forward, almost as the servant had related (it might have appeared with the desperate impulse to attempt even then the rescue of his father's remains) ; when, either repelled by the violent heat or suddenly recalled to recollection, he staggered back, struck his clenched hand wildly against his brow, and turned away just as that part of the roofing gave way ; the flames bursting out with increasing fury necessitating a hasty retreat. The conflagration presented altogether a scene of awful grandeur. Engines were playing on the other extremity of the mansion, though little hopes of checking the devastation were entertained.

All the furniture and other valuable property which it had been possible to rescue had been already removed, and now lay strewn out in the park before the house ; and there, a little aloof from the rest of the crowd, with arms folded on his breast, stood Eugene Trevor watching the progress of the demolition—the terrible glare distinctly revealing the expression of dark des-

pair settled in his glazed eyes and upturned countenance.

A few gentlemen of the neighbourhood were on the spot, but a feeling of delicacy restrained them from intruding on the sufferer their sympathy at that dreadful moment.

The feelings of a man who stands beholding the house of his forefathers burning before his eyes, with the fearful knowledge that a parent's blackened corpse is consuming to ashes beneath the ruins, might seem indeed to require no other consideration to render their harrowing nature complete. But were these the subject matter of the thoughts which pressed upon the soul of Eugene Trevor at that awful moment?—or had it been the natural promptings of filial piety alone which at first had impelled him to rush forwards in that fatal direction?

Alas! no—rather must we fear it was the impulse of the man, goaded by the consciousness that there too was consuming the papers on whose existence all which he had staked his greedy soul to obtain, and the destruction of which must be the total demolition of all his unrighteous hopes and prospects, bring him

to the feet of an injured and offended brother, and prove, in short, his ruin.

* * * *

The work of destruction continued unabated ; portion after portion of the burning mass gradually gave way ; the roof of the large dining-room fell in with a tremendous crash, and all the interior part of the mansion being now destroyed, nothing remained but the mere skeleton of one of the oldest, stateliest residences in the kingdom.

By this time, Eugene Trevor had turned away, and exerted himself to speak with the superior servants and superintendents of the estate ; and then the friends still lingering by, hesitated no longer to draw near. They first shook hands in silent and sorrowful token of their sympathy with the bereaved man, proceeding to press upon him invitations to accompany them to their respective homes. Eugene received their advances with as much calmness as could be expected ; their hospitality, however, he thankfully declined.

If he went anywhere he had promised to return to Silverton, but his presence would be

required on the spot some time longer. After he had seen to everything that remained to be done, he should probably go to ——, the town four miles distant. He had hurt his arm by approaching too near the fire, and must have it looked at by a surgeon.

His friends had too much consideration to urge him further, and having received his repeated thanks, and assured them that they could not be of any further assistance, they departed.

The further proceedings of that night, or rather morning (for it was about four o'clock) before the work of ruin was finally achieved, were, as may be supposed, to seek for the remains of Mr. Trevor from amidst the wreck of the fallen house. They were at length discovered.

There they lay : the iron chests which lined the apartment, (once the general library of the mansion, but long since monopolized by Mr. Trevor for his especial use and purposes) — and which alone remained of everything belonging to it, testified to its identity. The existence of these giving hopes of the security of its contents, caused a ray of renovated hope

to kindle on the countenance of Eugene Trevor, who superintended the investigation in person.

But the hope was but transitory. The position of the blackened bones indicating his father's remains, plainly betokened the vicinity of the miser to the old oak *bureau*, at the time of his dreadful death: of that receptacle, of course, nothing now remained but the iron bends which had once so jealously secured its contents, and the blackened ashes of paper in considerable quantity; rendering it still more probable that the horrible catastrophe had originated through their means—namely, that the wretched old man had set some of them on fire during their examination; indeed, within the fleshless hand of the miser, clutched doubtless in his dying agony, there still remained a scorched fragment of parchment, upon which the eager eyes of his son still deciphered a word or two, which at once told him his fate was decided; that it was the unrighteous will on which his future fortunes so strongly depended, the last atom of which, miraculously preserved, he now beheld. * * *

A few moments more, and Eugene Trevor turned his back upon the smoking ruins of his

home; and soon, in the hateful light of morning, with bent brow and livid cheek, was riding away to ——, with feelings at his heart it would be indeed but a futile endeavour to describe.

With the guilty woe of him who ponders over a well-merited fate — a serpent wound around the heart, stinging its every thought to strife—can alone perhaps suggest a fit comparison, when applied to the state of a man's mind under circumstances like the present.

CHAPTER XIX.

Away, come down from your tribunal seats ;
Put off your robes of state, and let your mien
Be pale and humbled.

MR. DE BURGH was in the north of England when he received news of the destruction of Montrevor, by means both of the public papers and a few hurried lines from his wife.

He had been contemplating at the time a speedy return ; but this dreadful intelligence hastened his movements, and three days after the fire he arrived at Silverton.

Mr. de Burgh did not see Mary at first. The unrest and agitation of mind under which for some time she had been suffering, brought to a climax by the shock this last dire event had occasioned, produced its physical effect, a kind of low nervous fever, now confined her to her bed.

Her cousin Louis was surprised to hear of Mary's being at Silverton, Mrs. de Burgh having slightly mentioned the fact in her hurried letter to him ; nor did she consider it at all necessary to enlighten her husband as to the cause and circumstances of her visit when on the night of his return, Mr. de Burgh commented somewhat sarcastically on the subject.

"Yes, Mary was very kind to come to me, when I told her of my accident and loneliness—indeed I do not see in the least why she should not have come," Mrs. de Burgh remarked.

"Nor I either, if she likes it," he answered drily—"at any rate this fire will bring matters to a crisis both as regards her affair with Eugene Trevor, as it will also a few others."

"Of course you will go and see after poor Eugene to-morrow, and try and persuade him to come here."

"Of course—but as to coming to stay here, I am pretty well persuaded that Eugene Trevor will have too much on his mind just now to think of visiting any where. I shall be curious to know how things will turn out."

"Oh, of course my poor uncle left Eugene all the money," Mrs. de Burgh said.

"Most probably, all his immense savings, but you know the estates are strictly entailed."

"Yes," was the answer, with some hesitation; "but if Eustace Trevor does not make his appearance."

"That will not alter the entail whilst he is alive, and every exertion will be made which can lead to his discovery, if his father's death does not, indeed, as there is every likelihood, make him come forward of himself."

"But if he is mad?"

"Pshaw!" was the only reply deigned by Mr. de Burgh, with the expression of indignant incredulity, which any such allusion always excited in him.

Mrs. de Burgh was silent for a few moments, but there was a very significant display of intelligence visible on her countenance.

The fact was, that she was inwardly struggling between a very womanly desire to let out the secret of which she was in possession, and the unwillingness she felt to gratify her husband by the communication of Eugene's rejection by Mary—also she felt some hesitating repugnance to relate the particulars concerning the identity of the lost Eustace Trevor with Mr. Temple,

the esteemed and beloved friend of all the Seaham family. But then her silence would but for a few hours postpone the intelligence—the truth would be revealed by Mary on the first opportunity, if it transpired not through other means. So at length, after keeping it fluttering for some time on the tip of her undecided tongue, the final plunge was taken, some mysteriously oracular words were spoken, which excited Mr. de Burgh's curiosity, and led to the full and final developement of the whole story of "Mr. Temple," and every particular relating to him as received from Mary. The surprise and interest of Mr. de Burgh at this communication, was of course extreme. He was much excited, walking about the room and questioning his wife over and over again on the subject, whilst she having once broken the ice scrupled not to afford him every satisfaction in her power—nay, taxing her imagination and ingenuity to make the romantic story even more extraordinary than it really was.

The following morning Mr. de Burgh rode off immediately after breakfast for the town of —, and on his return late that afternoon desired to see Mary, and though Mrs. de Burgh

objected that she was not fit for any exciting conversation—that she was very weak and ill, so much so, that she was going to write to Arthur Seaham to come to Silverton as soon as it was possible—Mr. de Burgh persisted on its being a matter of importance, the more so when he heard, that, on that very morning Mary had received a foreign letter, which Mrs. de Burgh supposed was from her friend the clergyman, the companion of Eustace Trevor, though she had not as yet alluded to its contents, which seemed nevertheless to have considerably affected Mary.

Mr. de Burgh was, therefore, in the course of the evening, taken to Mary's room, where she was lying on the sofa ready to receive her cousin, for whose visit she had been previously prepared.

The interview lasted some time—when Mr. de Burgh left the room, he immediately sat down and wrote a note, which he dispatched without delay. It was, he afterwards told Mrs. de Burgh, when she could induce him to satisfy her curiosity, to the lawyer concerned in the management of the Trevor affairs, whom he had seen that day. He had just written to

inform him where Eustace Trevor was to be found, it being proposed to send a special messenger abroad to summon him to England, in order to take possession of his inheritance.

"No will of any kind having been found in existence, Eustace Trevor comes of course into undisputed possession of the property and estates, both entailed and unentailed, that is to say," added Mr. de Burgh, with something of sarcastic triumph in his tone, "if he is found in a fit state of mind to enter upon his rights."

"And poor Eugene," demanded Mrs. de Burgh, bitterly.

"Eugene, I did not see," answered her husband; "a hurt he received the night of the fire, it seems, was inclining to inflammation, and he was ordered to keep quiet; at least, he would not see me when I called at the inn. The lawyer tells me he seems suffering much anxiety and distress of mind; no wonder, for from what I hear, it will go hard with him, if he finds not a generous and forgiving brother in Eustace Trevor; his ten thousand pounds, the portion secured by the marriage settlement to the younger children, will be but a poor set off against the immense

expectations on which he had speculated so securely."

"You are very ungenerous and unkind to speak in that way of a fallen man ; I hope Mary does not enter into your sentiments, I am sure I shall always stand up for Eugene."

"Oh, no doubt, through thick and thin," was the rather sneering reply, "unkind indeed, I should say, it was cruel kindness 'that the wrong from right defends;' as for Mary, I am glad to find that she has for some time not been quite the blindly obstinate and deluded person I had began regretfully to esteem her, that her infatuation has long since been giving way before the evidences of truth and reason—yes, her charity in the point in question is rather more honourable to her character than that which you profess ; there being an old proverb I have somewhere read, which says: 'Charity is an angel when it rejoices in the truth ; but (something with a very different name) when it embraces that, which it should only pity and weep over.' "

Tears, indeed ; the tears of many mingled and conflicting feelings were trickling through the pale fingers clasped over Mary's aching

eyes when left alone by her cousin. The letter that morning received from Mr. Wynne, the superscription of which had been noted down by Mr. de Burgh, held tight in her other hand; that letter, which indeed contained such fearful testimony to the truth of Jane Marryott's story, and all she had heard assigned against him, whom she had once so blindly and ignorantly worshipped. Mr. Wynne related succinctly the whole story of Eustace Trevor's wrongs, as confided by his own lips on his first arrival in Wales. This Mr. Wynne had taken on himself to do unauthorized by his friend; it was all, indeed, which Mary's letter seemed purposed to effect—her own communication of having entirely broken off her engagement with Eugene Trevor, only rendering more wholly out of the question the execution of the step she had so urged upon Eugene's brother.

For her own sake, for her preservation from a fate he so deprecated on her account—he had promised to sacrifice his own interest—to take no step likely to lead to the well-merited discomfiture and disturbance of his brother, or an exposure of the past. The point on which the agreement turned had now been established.

He would not too closely inquire by what means, and in what manner; but the promise he must still consider binding on his part, a promise but too much in unison with the solemn determination of his aggrieved and wounded spirit when last he quitted his father's house, never again to seek a son or brother's place within those dishonoured walls. This had been the substance of Mr. Wynne's letter. How changed the aspect of affairs since the period when it had been penned. How mighty the hand, and by what terrible means had been effected, that which her weak influence had attempted to achieve!

It might, indeed, be called an instance in which the still small voice must fail, but the power of the all mighty one be heard in the fire.

And now, all the past—the strange position in which she stood—the circumstances in which she had become involved, passed before Mary's mind's eye as in a bewildering dream—confused and conflicting feelings she could scarcely divide from one another, troubling her enfeebled spirits; till, at length, those relieving drops had flowed, and prayers mingled with those tears to the all

wise and the all merciful disposer of events, in whom she trusted.

* * * *

It must not be supposed that Eustace Trevor had been unmoved by the urgent appeal conveyed in Mary's letter; that the words she had written, the argument she had used, had unimpressed him with their justice and their truth. They brought to his recollection the words of the psalm sung that afternoon in the little church of Ll—— by the simple village choir, when first the fair face of Mary Seaham had cast its softening spell upon his frowning destiny—those words which had even then struck upon his fancy as strikingly applicable to his own strange case, and which from Mary's low sweet voice had thrilled like an angel's soft rebuke upon his ear.

“ Since I have placed my trust in God
A refuge always nigh,
Why should I, like a timorous bird,
To yonder mountain fly.”

But erroneous as might have been the cause of action, crooked the path he had been morbidly driven to pursue; innumerable causes seemed now to oppose the conduct that angel-like

minister with unworldly and too prevailing voice now urged him to pursue. No, for the present let it suffice that she was saved from a fate, which apart from all selfish feelings, he feared for her worse than death ; for the rest, matters must take their natural course, work out their own intended end, swayed by the hand which ruleth the universe—much more the affairs of the sons of men ; for neither to blind chance, or what men call fate, did Eustace Trevor commit his ways.

CHAPTER XX.

My gentle lad, what is't you read
Romance or fairy fable ?
Or is it some historic page
Of kings and crowns unstable ?
The young boy gave an upward glare ;
" It is the death of Abel !"

HOOD.

It was about ten days after the event recorded in the last chapter, that Mary Seaham, for the first time since her illness, came down stairs ; and wearied by the exertion, and left comparatively alone—for Mrs. de Burgh was driving with her little girl, and Mr. de Burgh, and her brother—who had arrived to take his sister away as soon as she was sufficiently strong enough to move—were also from home ; only the quiet, eldest boy remained to keep her company.

She was lying late in the afternoon upon the drawing-room sofa, the effects of her still lin-

gering weakness causing a dreamy feeling of weariness to creep over her. Struggling with the sensation, and wishing to arouse herself, she now and then opened her languid eyes, and spoke to her little companion, who sat so seriously at the foot of the couch, amusing himself with the book upon his knee—his favourite book of scripture prints and stories.

He was an interesting and peculiar child, very unlike the girl, who had all the *eveille*, excitable disposition of her mother—or the high-spirited, most beautiful child, the youngest boy, of whom his parents were so proud and fond.

“What are you reading, Charlie?” Mary inquired.

“About Cain and Abel. Here is the picture of Cain, that dark, bad man, who hated his brother Abel,” the child replied.

“And why did he hate him, Charlie?”

“Because his brother’s works were good, and his were evil.”

“It is very dreadful not to love one’s brother. Always love your’s, Charlie,” Mary said mournfully.

“I do love him,” the boy answered with simple earnestness, lifting up his expressive eyes

to his gentle monitor's face ; "and look," he continued, sidling closer to her side, "here are two other brothers, who once did not love one another ; and one was obliged to go and live for a great many years in a far-off country ; but see here, he is returned, and the brothers have forgiven one another ; and," continuing in the words of the scripture explanation written in the page, "Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept." That is a nicer picture, Mary, than that of Cain and Abel, for Abel there is dead, and Cain can never be forgiven ; but must wander about the earth with a mark upon his forehead, lest people should kill him ; but Jacob and Esau might be friends on earth, and meet again in heaven."

Mary placed her hand fondly and gratefully on the head of her dear little expositor. A tear of happier feeling trembling amidst the lashes of her drooping eyelids, than had gushed for many a day from her perplexed and troubled spirit, for she thought of two other brothers, who, through the mercy of God, were still spared on earth—the one to forgive, the other to be forgiven ; and a calm, peaceful, expression stole

over the sweet countenance whose placid serenity distressing thoughts had of late so sadly disturbed, till at length, as Charlie went on to read to her, at full, the history, as he said, "of another brother—the best brother of all." "Even Joseph, who was sold for a servant, whose feet they hurt in the stocks, who was laid in irons, until the time came that he was delivered, the word of the Lord tried him;" but who yet, when his brothers were brought to bow down before him, he spoke kindly to them, even to those who had done him such grievous wrong, and kissed them, and wept over them, and made them as rich and happy as he could—the soft monotony of the child's voice lulled her senses to repose; and with that glittering tear still moistening her drooping lashes, and a smile, sweet and innocent as might have been that of the child by her side, she peacefully slept.

The boy's voice then sunk to a whisper, and so absorbed was he in his interesting task, and the carpet of the saloon so thick and soft, that he perceived or heard nothing till a darkening shadow fell upon his book.

Then he quietly lifted up his serious eyes, and beheld a tall stranger gentleman standing

at a little distance before him. But the stranger was not looking at him, the little boy : his full, dark eyes were bent with earnest intensity upon the sleeping Mary, who, as she lay there with that still serenity of brow, that look almost of child-like innocence which sleep, like death, sometimes brings back to the countenance, might have well suggested to the recollection of the gazer these beautiful lines of Mrs. Hemans, "The Sleeper :"

" Oh lightly, lightly tread,
Revere the pale still brow,
The meekly drooping head,
The long hair's willowy flow.

" Ye know not what ye do,
That call the slumberer back
From the world unseen by you,
Unto life's dim, faded track.

" Her soul is far away
In her childhood's land perchance,
Where her young sisters play,
Where shines her brother's glance.

" Some old sweet native sound,
Her spirit haply weaves ;
A harmony profound,
Of woods with all their leaves.

“ A murmur of the sea,
A laughing tone of streams ;
Long may her sojourn be
In the music land of dreams.”

The stranger's rivetted regard seemed to attract the young Charlie's also, for he now turned his eyes upon the slumberer, and then, as if equally attracted by the angelic sweetness of her expression at that moment, or wishing to demonstrate to the intruder the privileged position he held with respect to the object of their joint attention, he slid still nearer to Mary's pillow, and gently kissed her cheek ; then, again looking up, something remarkable in the stranger's mien and countenance—something mournful and tender, yet altogether more noble and beautiful than he had perhaps ever seen before upon the face of man, seemed to inspire favour and confidence in his innocent breast ; for the little fellow smiled benignantly and trustfully, as, holding out his hand, he said softly :

“ And you may kiss her too, if you like ; but very gently : you must not wake her, she has been so ill, poor thing !”

At these words his listener started, dropped

the little hand he had kindly taken, the crimson blood suffusing his brow. He cast one hurried glance on the object of their conversation, then with irresolute quietness turned away, and paced the room with hushed but rapid steps, as if to calm some sudden storm of troubled feeling, the boy's innocently spoken words had awakened in his breast.

When next he paused before the couch, the deep flush had passed away, leaving his countenance paler than before, though calmer and more composed; and smiling kindly upon the watchful child, as if to promise him that his injunctions should not be disregarded, he reverently stooped, and "very gently," as the boy had enjoined, touched with his lips the fair white hand which drooped by Mary's side; and when again he raised his head, the wondering child perceived a tear glistening in the tall, pale stranger's eye. And no wonder if the heart of Eustace Trevor swelled with peculiar emotion at that moment! The last time his lips had pressed the form of woman it had been in that kiss of agony, in "that last kiss which never was the last," which, in his strong despair and mighty anguish, he had imprinted on the cold,

cold brow of his mother, ere they hid her from his sight for ever!—his then only beloved on earth, with whom all the light and hope of his existence would be quenched for ever!

And must he not now turn away from her he had learnt since to love, with a love such as he had thought never again to feel on earth?—from that being, fair, and gentle, and good as the object of his soul's first pure, faithful idolatry: she whose sleeping smile—cold, pale and tranquil almost as that which had greeted his arrival that night of never-to-be-forgotten misery—now welcomed the exile on his homeless, hearthless, desolate return!

Must he turn away, and never look on *her*—never look on Mary thus again? Was it the last time, as it had been the first, that he should ever dare to press that dear hand as now he had done? Nay, more—must he see it given to another?—would he be called upon to crown the measure of that generous mercy with which he had come, his heart overflowing—by withdrawing the restraining hand he had, for the few last years, held between his unnatural enemy, and that innocent object of his enemy's covetous affections?

Was he to be called upon—yes, perhaps by Mary herself—to abstain from his threatened exposure of the past, and stand from between Eugene and herself?—now, in his hour of triumph, to be merciful, generous and forgiving in this also?

For why else did he see her here?—why, if the purport of her letter still held good, that she had bade adieu—cancelled for ever her engagement with her former lover? Why, then, was she here, in the very place where she had first fallen into this dangerous snare?

Ah, no!—he saw it all too plainly! Impelled by the impulse of a woman's mistaken, but generous devotion, her lover's fallen fortunes, whilst engaging her pity, had redeemed his offences in her eyes, and recalled her alienated affections; that she was here, like a ministering angel, to assure him of this—to console him, to sympathize; perhaps to ward off, by her intercession, the disgrace and ruin to which his injured brother's dreaded coming threatened to overwhelm the object of her solicitude.

But he had no time to dwell on these things. There had been something in his touch, light as it had been, which proved sufficient to break

the charm of slumber. Mary slowly unclosed her eyes, and murmuring :

“Are you there, Charlie?” looked up and beheld her new companion. One uncertain bewildered gaze she fixed upon his face, then gliding to her feet cried : “Mr. Trevor, are you really come?” and burst into tears.

“Yes, Miss Seaham, I am come,” was the reply, in a voice trembling with emotion ; and taking the hands she had extended towards him, gently reseated her on the sofa, and sat down by her side, looking with earnest mournfulness in her face.

“Yes, I am come, and thank you for this feeling welcome, which is but too much required, for you may well imagine what a coming, one such as mine must be.”

“Yes, yes,” she murmured through her fast falling tears ; “I know, I feel it must be a fearful trial ; your father’s dreadful death, the melancholy destruction of your home. But—but, Mr. Trevor, it is the hand of the Almighty—His great and terrible hand—we must look upon it as such ; and,” lifting up her streaming eyes, “hope for His loving-mercies to shine forth once again. There has been much of

dark and terrible in the past, but let us pray that the future may atone. Yes, you have returned, and all may still be right."

"You thing so," he replied gently, but still most mournfully; then averting his face, added in low and sterner accents of interrogation: "and my brother?"

"He has been ill," was Mary's low reply, "suffering, it is to be feared, as much from mental anxiety as from physical pain. Oh, Mr. Trevor, your coming to him indeed must prove a relief—a relief from the worst of sufferings—suspense."

"What has he to fear?" demanded Eustace Trevor.

"What? You will learn too soon the desperate nature of your brother's position, unless, indeed, he finds in you one more generous and forgiving than he has any right or reason to expect."

Mary spoke earnestly, but with firmness, almost severity; and as she uttered these last words' Eustace Trevor turned and anxiously regarded her.

"Eugene need have no fears on any pecuniary account," he again repeated; "he will find in

me one who cannot set too low a value on that of which he strove so hard to deprive me. Surely you, Miss Seaham, could not have believed me capable of so poor and contemptible a spirit of revenge, as to entertain any doubt or fear as regards my conduct in that respect?"

"No, no," Mary replied, with trembling fervour; "I might have rested well assured as to what must be the high and holy character of *your* revenge. 'If your enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink;' and oh, Mr. Trevor, by so doing, coals of fire will indeed be heaped upon your unhappy brother's head. But, alas! can *he* suppose you capable of such magnanimity—he of so different a spirit to your own?"

There was a spirit in the mild eyes, a colour on the pale cheek turned towards him, as she thus expressed herself, which caused a corresponding glow to illumine the countenance of her listener, and with still greater earnestness he regarded her.

Mary turned away, bending her head over the boy, who had again drawn caressingly to her side, whilst in low, faltering accents she

replied to his inquiries, whether she had come to Silverton since the fire ?

“ No, the afternoon before it had occurred.”

“ Had she seen his brother ?”

“ She had, contrary to her cousin Olivia’s promise, that so painful and useless an ordeal should be spared her. She had found him at Silverton on her arrival. It had been an interview most distressing and repugnant to her feelings at the time, though the startling and terrible events, which so closely succeeded, had in a great degree diverted her mind from any selfish consideration. She had since then been very ill. Her illness had detained her at Silverton, but this I shall not regret,” she added. “ I shall now depart with the happy consciousness, which I have not experienced for the last few years, that all is right which has been for long so very wrong, my mind relieved of its harassing weight of doubt, darkness and perplexity.”

“ Yes, your sense of disinterested justice may be satisfied ; but your heart, will it remain equally so ? The cause which you have so generously espoused, established ; will not other feelings re-assert their power, and my brother

again triumph in the possession of that which, to call my own, I would gladly have cast at his feet the richest inheritance on earth?"

These words were uttered with almost breathless agitation.

"No," was the reply in a voice so low and trembling that the anxious listener had to hold his breath to catch its accents; "such feelings have long been destroyed, and can never reassert their influence. Even pity is done away save for the wounded conscience, which he who once I loved must carry with him through life; yes, pity even is now scarcely to be excited; and love—can love survive esteem?"

With a jealous, yearning glance Eustace Trevor watched the tears again falling from the agitated speaker's eyes, kissed away by the sympathising child; and then he rose and began again to pace the room as if to stem some fresh torrent of inward emotion which stirred within his breast. But at this juncture the door opened abruptly, and in another moment Eustace Trevor's hand was clasped in Louis de Burgh's, who, followed by Arthur Seaham, entered the room; and Mary, leaning on her brother's arm, left the re-united friends together.

CHAPTER XXI.

Flesh and blood,
You brother mine, that entertained ambition,
Expelled remorse and nature,

* * * *

I do forgive thee,
Unnatural as thou art—
Forgive thy rankest fault.

TEMPEST.

ARTHUR SEAHAM stood at the hall door two days after, looking out for the carriage which was to convey himself and sister from Silverton, some delay having been occasioned by the non-arrival of the post-horses.

Suddenly a single horse's hoof was heard approaching, and he had but just time to retreat out of observation, when Eugene Trevor rode up to the door.

Arthur Seaham could not but feel shocked at his altered appearance—his haggard counten-

ance, and the strong marks of mental suffering it exhibited. His very form seemed bowed down by the sudden weight of care and anxiety which had fallen upon him; and when, having dismounted, and rang the bell, he stood there, whilst waiting for the servant to attend the summons, unconscious of human regard, holding his horse's rein; — there was something touching to the young man's kindly heart, in the manner in which Eugene Trevor stroked the glossy mane of the noble animal as it rubbed its head against his master's shoulder, looking up affectionately into his face.

The action seemed as expressively as words to say :

“ Poor fellow ! it must go hard indeed with me before I can make up my mind to part with you ; in your eye, at least, is none of the suspicion and distrust I plainly perceive in every other.” And softened by this touch of nature, and remembering the attachment to his sister—sincere he believed at the time, which like a fair flower amongst noxious plants had shewn his nature to be so capable of better things—a feeling of regret was excited in Arthur Seaham's mind that that “ root of all evil,” the

promoter of "every foolish and hurtful lust—the love of money," should ever have struck its baneful fibres in this man's heart.

* * * * *

Eugene Trevor had demanded a personal interview with his brother previous to his departure for London, through the lawyer who for many years had been the legal adviser of the family, and whom he still retained on his own account. Eustace Trevor had deemed it expedient to call in another man of business for himself. This person was now at Silverton, with some of the necessary documents connected with the property now devolving upon him; and Mr. de Burgh proposed the meeting of the brothers should take place there.

It was with perfect unconsciousness of what awaited her, that Mary Seaham entered the library some few minutes after, in order to bid adieu to her cousins, who, she had been told, were awaiting her there.

She had closed the door behind her before perceiving her mistake, and stood rooted to the spot with feelings the nature of which may be better imagined than described, at finding herself at this critical moment in the presence of

the brothers—those two beings with whom her fate had been so strangely, so intricately involved.

Yes, there stood the one, with look and bearing almost like that said to have distinguished man before the Fall :

“Erect and tall—Godlike erect, with native honour clad,
Within whose looks divine the image of the glorious
Maker shone,
Truth, wisdom, sanctitude, severe and pure.
* * * * *
His fair large front and eye sublime”—

Irradiated with that attribute of God himself—
a free and full forgiveness of an enemy.

And the other—with whom might his aspect
at that moment suggest comparison ? Alas !
we fear but to

“That least erected spirit that fell
From Heaven ; whose looks and thoughts even in
Heaven
Were always downwards bent, admiring more
The riches of Heaven’s pavement trodden gold,
Than aught divine or holy there.”

For as there he sat, even as he had done when
suddenly confronted that night with his offended,
injured brother, in the room of the London

hotel, with bent brow and lowering eye, half defiance and half fear; so now still more he seemed to shrink into abject nothingness before him, abashed and confounded by the majestic power of goodness—the awful loveliness of a virtuous and noble revenge. For a few grave, calm, but gentle words from Eustace Trevor's lips had already set his anxious fears at rest—had assured him that the well-merited ruin with which the overthrow, so sudden and unlooked-for, of his unrighteous hopes and machinations had threatened to overwhelm him, would be averted.

And there stood Mary, pale and motionless. Whilst from one to another wandered her distressed and startled glance, she yet saw and marked the contrast; saw—and mourned in spirit that thus too late her eyes were opened; that thus, for the first time, had been presented, side by side to her enlightened perception, the brother whom in her deceived imagination she had so blindly chosen—the one she had so ignorantly refused.

Yes, too late—for could she dare now to lift her eyes to own the full, but tardy abnegation of every thought and feeling of her heart,

as well as understanding, to the noble being it had lost?

Oh, no ! for those two last days that they had passed under the same roof together—in the same manner, as she had seemed to shrink, with timid, lowly, self-abasement from the brother of her discarded lover, had Eustace Trevor appeared almost equally to avoid any close communion with that brother's alienated love. It was, therefore, influenced by these considerations, that after her first astounded pause, feeling that it was now impossible to retreat, and scarcely knowing what she did, Mary approached the table over which Eugene Trevor had been leaning on her entrance, but now had risen—holding out her hand, as her kindly heart perhaps, under any circumstances, would have instinctively dictated towards any being suffering under like vicissitude ; but something in the grasp which closed over it—a detaining grasp, such as that with which the miser may be supposed to clasp some treasure on the point of making itself wings to fly away, seemed to distress and perplex her.

She turned with downcast eyes towards Eustace Trevor. His face, as she had ap-

proached his brother, had been averted with an expression in which, perhaps, was more of human weakness than it had before exhibited ; but now he turned again and gratefully received the other she extended, in sign of parting, then as gently released it ; and standing thus between the brothers, all the noble self-forgetfulness of Mary's nature seemed to revive within her. She felt that through her means the gulph had further widened which kept them apart—that she had been the shadow between their hearts, as now she stood in person—it was over now for ever. She was to go from between them—from him towards whom her heart had too late inclined, and from him from whom it had declined. Let her last act be at least one more blest in its effects, than had been hitherto her destiny to produce concerning them.

With a smile, faint, sad, and tearful, such as might have seemed almost to plead forgiveness from the one whom she ceased, and the one whom she had learnt too late, to love, she again extended her hands, and with a gentle movement joined those of the brothers together ; then hurried from the room.

A few moments more, and Mr. de Burgh who

was on his way to seek her had conducted her to the carriage, and Arthur springing in by her side; once more Mary Seaham was driven far away from Silverton.

And the brothers — taken by surprise by Mary's abrupt departure, the eyes of both had followed her from the room with an expression in which emotion of no common kind was visible; then turned silently from one another, only too anxious to be released from a situation, of which they could not but mutually feel the increased delicacy and embarrassment; the lawyers were summoned to their presence; and if a few minutes before Eugene Trevor had pursued with wistful glance the retreating form of Mary, the still more anxious brow and eager eye with which he might have been seen soon after entering with those gentlemen into the discussion of the settlement of his intricate affairs, plainly testified that for him at least there was, as there had ever been closer affections twined about his heart—deeper interests at stake than any that were connected with that pale sad girl, who for so long had hovered like a redeeming angel round his path, but who now turned away her light from him *for ever*.

Not so Eustace Trevor, as absent and inattentive he sat abstractedly by, or paced with anxious steps the boundary of the library, joining only when directly appealed to, or addressed, in the matters under discussion. It was plainly apparent how light and trifling the weight he attached to the heavy demand made under his sanction upon his generous liberality.

Only once he paused, and with more fixed attention looked upon his brother with an expression in which something of noble contempt seemed to curl his lip and to flash forth from his eye.

Perhaps the part he saw him play on this occasion recalled to his remembrance another scene of similar, yet contrary character, when he had found that brother seated in the library of Montrevor, with as much anxious avidity superintending arrangements of no such disinterested nature as those of which he now so graspingly availed himself.

But it was for a moment that any such invidious reminiscences retained their place within that generous soul. Soon had they vanished, as they came—the fire from his eye, the curl

from his lip. And again Eustace Trevor paced the room—and thought on Mary.

A few months more, and Eugene Trevor, having settled his affairs to his entire satisfaction—thanks to the most generous and forgiving of brothers—had left England for the continent ; and that same space of time found Eustace Trevor established in the neighbourhood of Montrevor, surrounded by admiring, and congratulating friends ; superintending the improvement of his property, and making arrangements for the erection of a new mansion on the site of the one destroyed, but chiefly employed in acts of charity and beneficence towards the hitherto neglected poor and necessitous surrounding him, causing many a heart to sing for joy, who for many a long year had prayed and sued in vain at the wealthy miser's door.

CHAPTER XXII.

Alas! the maiden sighed since first
I said : ' Oh, fountain, read my doom.'
What vainest fancies have I nursed,
Of which I am myself the tomb!

L. E. L.

It was a beautiful evening of that next summer year, and a large family-party was assembled at Glan Pennant, now again inhabited by its rightful owner, Arthur Seaham: the handsome dowry of his lovely bride, Carrie Elliott, joined to the emolument derived from the rapid and promising rise in his profession, having enabled him to take possession of his much loved home on his marriage, about a twelve month since.

Not only were Alice Gillespie and her family the guests of the young couple; but Lady Everingham, their eldest sister, who had returned from India, and the beautiful Selina, whose

husband was shortly to follow, was staying with their children at Plas-Glyn, with the Morgans; and no evening passed without, as may be supposed, some reunion of this sort taking place at one or the other of the neighbouring residences. But there was one still wanting, on this present occasion, without whom such gatherings could not be complete—one, regarded with a kind of peculiar love by each there present, though by none, perhaps, with such especial tenderness as by the young master and mistress of Glan Pennant; and ever and anon the question as to when Mary would return, and what could have kept her out so late, was heard repeated: the children of the party going back to Plas-Glyn, sorrowful at not having been able to wish that dear Aunt Mary good night.

Some one, at length, remarked that Mr. Wynne had not been seen for the last day or two. Arthur Seaham observed, in reply, that he had been expecting a visitor, with whom he had been probably occupied; and he and Carrie exchanged looks of some significance.

Mary was not a partner in their secret un-

derstanding. Calmly, as was her wont, she had been returning homeward, with the happy consciousness that her presence that day had lighted up many a face with sunshine—bound up by its consolation, many a wounded heart—that she could lay her head on her pillow that night, and feel that she had to-day lived to God, and to her fellow-creatures.

And truly many a tongue blessed, and many an eye turned with love and respect, as they looked upon that sweet pale face, returning slowly from her wanderings amongst them. Mary knew she was expected home to tea, but having turned a wistful eye towards her favourite hill, now all red and glowing in the early sunset, finally began the ascent; and once more we see her seated on that cool, quiet spot, her eye fixed on the same fair scene she had viewed with such fond, but hopeful regret, on the evening of her last departure from her mountain-home. And, oh! it was on such occasions, when hours of languid ease returned like this she now enjoyed, that Mary felt the urgent necessity of bracing up her mind and nerves by a course of healthy action, by carrying out into practice the lesson which the

great trial of her early youth had taught her—"Patience, abnegation of self, and devotion to others." For then would she feel stealing over her senses the spirit of those days, when she had walked the earth overshadowed by a dream. Yes, the spirit of her dream had changed since last we followed Mary Seaham to this charmed spot!—the shadows of hopes at that time vaguely cherished in her breast, soon, to her sorrow, so wonderfully realized, had passed away for ever, as their idol object had been torn from its shrine.

And now this purer, nobler image, reared upon the crumbled image of the former, engendered by no ideal dreams—no morbid fantasy, but which, by the force of its own glorious strength and beauty, had won its victory over her soul—must this be also doomed to perish—to fade away into a haunting shadow of the past?

Yes, Eustace Trevor must be to her as one dead—not absent!—the dream be dissipated, for the hope was vain on which it was founded: vain—and incompatible with the pure, calm hope it was now the desire of her heart to aspire.

Not very long, therefore, did Mary allow her-

self to indulge in the beguiling luxury of her solitary repose ; but remembering that there were loving hearts at home awaiting her return, she aroused herself from the spirit of reverie which was stealing over her, and waiting but to pluck some few sprigs of the first white heath of the season, with one last, lingering look on the fading beauties of the landscape, she rose and turned to depart ; but as if arrested by fear or a feeling of wonder,

“ Still she stood with her lips apart,
And forgotten, the flowerets dropped from her fingers,
Whilst to her eyes and her cheeks, came the light and
The bloom of the morning.”

For it was no dream—no deluding vision of her imagination out of which she was called to awake—a shadow indeed was upon her path, but it was the form of Eustace Trevor, which in its noble reality stood before her !

* * * *

The conversation which ensued was not so lengthened as that which had taken place between Edward Temple and Mary Seaham, on that same spot some six years ago ; but need we say that its issue was of a very different

character, and that this time Eustace did not descend the hill alone.

Mr. Wynne was waiting at the 'gate of Glan Pennant, when at length the stately figure of his friend, and leaning on his arm the fair and fragile form of Mary,

“The dew on the plaid, and the tear in her e'e,”

appeared in sight.

Hastening to meet them, he wrung the hand of Mary with emotion, but bade her go in fast and make the tea which had been waiting for her ever so long—the water getting cold whilst she was after her old tricks, dreaming on the hills; and Mary, with a grateful smile, having returned the fervent pressure of her good old friend, in broken accents, promised that she would dream no more.

She was not indeed free from a deep debt of gratitude to Mr. Wynne, for it was he who, it may be said, had formed the cementing link between the fates of Mary Seaham and Eustace Trevor.

Not that any such was wanting to maintain the strongly rooted attachment of Eustace towards Mary. It was one which must ever

have exerted a sensible and indelible influence over his future life, as it had done over the few last years of his past existence. But there were scruples in his mind, the result perhaps of that extreme susceptibility conspicuous in his character, on every point of delicacy or honour, which restrained him from yielding himself to the delightful hope of obtaining the beloved of his brother for his wife; and it was these morbid scruples, as he deemed them, that Mr. Wynne had made every effort to overcome, and that not so much by direct argument, as by bringing before his friend's imagination the lovely picture of Mary's present existence, finally declaring that, through the daily increasing heavenliness of her life and conversation, she was growing so much too good for this world, that they should not be allowed to retain her long amongst them, did not some earthly tie of a very binding nature give her some motive for interest here below; and there was one alone he felt convinced could have that power—for that some secret grief, some sorrow unspoken, unsuspected—some strongly crushed affection, lay at the bottom of Mary Seaham's outwardly calm and patient demeanour, and this in no way

connected with the old delusion of her youth, her old friend felt but too well assured.

So on this hint it was that Eustace Trevor came—came with a heart all yearning, tremulous tenderness and solicitude—and once more on the Welsh hill-side, laid the hope and happiness of his future life at the feet of Mary Seaham.

* * * *

And the world—that part of it at least which had known of the engagement subsisting between Mary and Eugene Trevor—might remark on the singular and interesting circumstance of her union with the elder brother; but as the general understanding had been, that through Eugene's own fault his engagement had been dissolved, and his change of position considerably altering that same charitable world's estimation of the younger brother's character, there were few inclined to make any invidious comment on the new arrangement, nor deem it anything but one—most wise, fortunate, and just.

There was, however, amongst Mary's friends, one who seemed inclined at first to frown on the affair—Mrs. de Burgh was loth to the

last to let fall the weapons of defence she had always wielded in behalf of her old favourite, and maintained, that if there was a law against a marriage with two brothers, she considered consecutive attachment to each equally to be repudiated. But as she could not well carry out the argument which her husband so triumphantly derided, she in the end let the subject drop; and finally, with as much kindly warmth as she had bestowed upon the beloved of Eugene, received beneath her roof the bride of Eustace Trevor.

* * * *

As we are upon the subject, we might as well regretfully state, that Silverton has never yet become quite the perfect seat of conjugal felicity we would fain have left it, but that petty bickerings and debates still occasionally desecrate its inner walls.

Still we hope that, though there are no very conspicuous symptoms of reform, the evil is somewhat on the decrease; that the fair Olivia, as she grows older, steadies down in a degree her high-wrought expectations and ideas; and her husband, in proportion, softens away his asperity and selfish disregard, allow-

ing his natural amiability of disposition to have its own way towards his wife, as well as to the rest of the world. Whilst, at the same time, was there not a mansion in the neighbourhood where a perfect pattern of unity and godly love was exhibited, such as put to shame every spirit of domestic strife which approached it?

In fact, the prosperity of the de Burghs continues so unabated, so little else do they find in life to ruffle the even tenor of their lot, that if they do still indulge in a few domestic quarrels, it would seem to be, that, preserved from every other exciting cause of trouble and annoyance, it must be on the principle adopted by two little sisters of our acquaintance, who, on being reproved for their continual squabbles with one another, begged that they might not be deprived of this privilege, saying that it would take from them their greatest amusement; in short, be so very dull, if they were not allowed to quarrel.

The Eustace Trevors first went abroad: there they revisited those scenes they had last viewed together under such different auspices, but which had been the period from which Mary dated the current of her fate to have been

turned—a purer, nobler image to have risen on the ruins of the old; and Eustace Trevor—blessed beyond conception, finds himself in the enjoyment of that most ambitioned privilege, the guide and guardian of his Mary, beneath skies which seemed to grow still “fairer for her sake.”

In about a year’s time, they returned to England, where the new mansion awaited their reception. The mansion had been rebuilt much on the same plan as the other, only the position and arrangement of the library was entirely altered. One room, as far as it were possible, had been remodelled by Eustace after the fashion of the original—that one in which at once his happiest and his most agonizing hours in that old home might be said to have been spent.

Mary did not tell her husband, as they sat together in the sunny window of that apartment, the very afternoon of their arrival, what associations were in her mind connected with that place.

Eustace Trevor had had no personal communication with his brother since they parted at Silverton. It is easier for the offended to forgive than the offender to be forgiven, and no

true reconciliation could ever heal the wounds, which his injured brother's generous conduct had impressed on Eugene's galled conscience. Besides, what sympathy could exist between two natures so different? what intercourse be established between two individuals whose course of conduct and habits of life were so widely apart?

What were Eugene Trevor's feelings when he heard of Mary Seaham's marriage with his brother, we cannot exactly define; but that it placed only a more decisive barrier between their personal intercourse, may be imagined. He lived on his handsome younger brother's income of two thousand a-year, in London; his brother having paid all his debts, and thus added to his legitimate claim of ten thousand pounds to which alone he was entitled.

The brothers met occasionally in London; but Eugene never accepted any invitation to visit Montrevor, nor was he scarcely heard of amongst his former country friends. Even Silverton was deserted by him.

Some say that the avaricious parsimony of his father is growing rapidly upon him, and this and many other similarities of character and con-

duct which year after year develop themselves, may well cause Mary gratefully to rejoice that she was suffered before too late to redeem the error of *her first mistaken choice*.

THE END.

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